

THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

Vol. XIV

SEPTEMBER, 1904

No. I

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$2.50

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Entered at New York Post-Office as second-class mail matter

Issued Monthly by Ess Ess Publishing Company, 452 Fifth Avenue, New York

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WILLIAM GREEN, Printer, New York

THE MISSION OF MR. EUSTACE GREYNE

By Robert Hichens

MRS. EUSTACE GREYNE (pronounced Green) wrinkled her forehead—that noble, that startling forehead which had been written about in the newspapers of two hemispheres—laid down her American Squeezing pen, and sighed. It was an autumn day, nipping and melancholy, full of the rustle of dying leaves and the faint sound of muffin bells, and Belgrave Square looked sad even to the great female novelist who had written her way into a mansion there. Fog hung about with the policeman on the pavement. The passing motor-cars were like shadows. Their stertorous pantings sounded to Mrs. Greyne's ears like the asthma of dying monsters. She sighed again, and murmured in a deep contralto voice, "It must be so." Then she got up, crossed the heavy Persian carpet which had been bought with the proceeds of a short story in her earlier days, and placed her forefinger upon an electric bell.

Like lightning a powdered giant came.

"Has Mr. Greyne gone out?"

"No, ma'am."

"Where is he?"

"In his study, ma'am, pasting the last of the cuttings into the new album."

Mrs. Greyne smiled. It was a pretty picture the unconscious six-footer had conjured up.

"I am sorry to disturb Mr. Greyne," she answered, with that gracious, and even curling suavity which won all

hearts; "but I wish to see him. Will you ask him to come to me for a moment?"

The giant flew, silk-stockinged, to obey the mandate, while Mrs. Greyne sat down on a carved oaken chair of ecclesiastical aspect, to await her husband.

She was a famous woman, a personage, this simply attired lady. With an American Squeezing pen she had won fame, fortune and a mansion in Belgrave Square, and all without the sacrifice of principle. Respectability incarnate, she had so dealt with the sorrows and evils of the world that she had rendered them utterly acceptable to Mrs. Grundy, Mr. Grundy and all the Misses Grundy. People said she dived into the depths of human nature, and brought up nothing that need scandalize a curate's grandmother or the whole-aunt of an archdeacon; and this was so true that she had made a really prodigious amount of money. Her large, her solid, her unrelenting books lay upon every table. Even the smart set kept them, uncut—like pretty sinners who have never been "found out"—to give an air of hazard intellectuality to frisky boudoirs. All the clergy, however unable to get their tithes, bought them. All bishops alluded to them in "pulpit utterances." Fabulous prices were paid for them by magazine editors. They ran as serials through all the tale of months. The suburbs battened on them. The provinces adored

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them. County people talked of no other literature. In fact, Mrs. Eustace Greyne was a really fabulous success.

Why, then, should she heave these heavy sighs in Belgrave Square? Why should she lift an intellectual hand as though to tousle the glossy chestnut bandeaux which swept back from her forcible forehead, and screw her long and reassuring features—powerful as those of some Roman emperor, yet orthodox as ever could have been Miss Hannah More's—into these wrinkles of perplexity and distress?

The door opened, and Mr. Eustace Greyne appeared, "What is it, Eugenia?" upon his lips.

Mr. Greyne was a number of years younger than his celebrated wife, and looked even younger than his years. He was a very smart man, with smooth, jet-black hair, which he wore parted in the middle; pleasant, dark eyes that could twinkle gently; a clear, pale complexion, and a nice, tall figure. One felt, in glancing at him, that he had been an Eton boy, and had at least thought of going into the militia at some period of his life. His history can be briefly told.

Scarcely had he emerged into the world before he met and was married to Mrs. Eustace Greyne, then Miss Eugenia Hannibal-Barker. He had had no time to sow a single oat, wild or otherwise; no time to adore a bar-maid, or wish to have his name linked with that of an actress; no time to do anything wrong or even to know, with the complete accuracy desired by all persevering young men, what was really wrong. Miss Eugenia Hannibal-Barker sailed upon his horizon, and he struck his flag to matrimony. Ever since then he had been her husband, and had never, even for one second, emerged beyond the boundaries of the most intellectual respectability. He was the most innocent of men, although he knew all the important editors in London. Swaddled in money by his successful wife, he considered her a goddess. She poured the thousands into Coutts's Bank, and with the arrival of each fresh thousand he was

more firmly convinced that she was a goddess. To say he looked up to her would be too mild. As the cockney tourist in Chamounix peers at the summit of Mont Blanc, he peered at Mrs. Greyne. And when, finally, she bought the lease of the mansion in Belgrave Square, he knew her Delphic.

So, now, he appeared in the oracle's retreat, respectfully, "What is it, Eugenia?" upon his admiring lips.

"Sit down, my husband," she murmured.

Mr. Greyne subsided by the fire, placing his pointed patent-leather toes upon the burnished fender. Without, the fog grew deeper and the chorus of the muffin bells more plaintive. The firelight, flickering over Mrs. Greyne's majestic features, made them look Rembrandtesque. Her large, ox-like eyes were fixed and thoughtful. After a pause, she said:

"Eustace, I shall have to send you upon a mission."

"A mission, Eugenia!" said Mr. Greyne, in great surprise.

"A mission of the utmost importance, the utmost delicacy."

"Has it anything to do with Romeike & Curtice?"

"No."

"Will it take me far?"

"That is my trouble. It will take you very far."

"Out of London?"

"Oh, yes."

"Out of—not out of England?"

"Yes. It will take you to Algeria."

"Good gracious!" cried Mr. Greyne. Mrs. Greyne sighed.

"Good gracious!" Mr. Greyne repeated, after a short interval. "Am I to go alone?"

"Of course you must take Darrell." Darrell was Mr. Greyne's valet.

"And what am I to do at Algiers?"

"You must obtain for me there the whole of the material for book six of 'Catherine's Repentance.'" "Catherine's Repentance" was the gigantic novel upon which Mrs. Greyne was at that moment engaged.

"I will not disguise from you, Eustace," continued Mrs. Greyne,

looking increasingly Rembrandtesque, "that, in my present work, I am taking a somewhat new departure."

"Well, but we are very comfortable here," said Mr. Greyne.

With each new book, they had changed their abode. "Harriet" took them from Phillimore Gardens to Queensgate Terrace; "Jane's Desire" moved them on to a corner house in Sloane street; with "Isobel's Fortune" they passed to Curzon street; "Susan's Vanity" landed them in Coburg Place; and, finally, "Margaret's Involution" had planted them in Belgrave Square. Now, with each of these works of genius Mrs. Greyne had taken what she called "a new departure." Mr. Greyne's remark is, therefore, explicable.

"True. Still, there is always Park Lane."

She mused for a moment. Then, leaning more heavily upon the carved lions of her chair, she continued:

"Hitherto, although I have sometimes dealt with human frailty, I have treated it gently. I have never betrayed a Zola-spirit."

"Zola! My darling!" cried Mr. Eustace Greyne. "You are surely not going to betray anything of that sort now!"

"If she does, we shall soon have to move off to West Kensington," was his secret thought.

"No. But in book six of 'Catherine' I have to deal with sin, with tumult, with African frailty. It is inevitable."

She sighed once more. The burden of the new book was very heavy upon her.

"African frailty!" murmured the astounded Eustace Greyne.

"Now, neither you nor I, my husband, know anything about this."

"Certainly not, my darling. How should we? We have never explored beyond Lucerne."

"We must, therefore, get to know about it—at least you must. For I cannot leave London. The continuity of the brain's traveling must not be imperiled by any violent bodily

activity. In the present stage of my book a sea journey might be disastrous."

"Certainly, you should keep quiet, my love. But then—"

"You must go for me to Algiers. There you must get me what I want. I fear you will have to poke about in the native quarters a good deal for it, so you had better buy two revolvers, one for yourself and one for Darrell."

Mr. Greyne gasped. The calmness of his wife amazed him. He was not intellectual enough to comprehend fully the deep imaginings of a mighty brain, the obsession work is in the worker.

"African frailty is what I want," pursued Mrs. Greyne. "One hundred closely printed pages of African frailty. You will collect for me the raw material, and I shall so manipulate it that it will fall discreetly, even elevatingly, into the artistic whole. Do you understand me, Eustace?"

"I am to travel to Algiers and see all the wickedness to be seen there, take notes of it, and bring them back to you."

"Precisely."

"And how long am I to stay?"

"Until you have made yourself acquainted with the depths."

"A fortnight?"

"I should think that would be enough. Take Brush's remedy for seasickness and plenty of antipyrin, your fur coat for the crossing, and a white helmet and umbrella for the arrival. You have lead pencils?"

"Plenty."

"A couple of Merrin's exercise books should be enough to contain your notes."

"When am I to go?"

"The sooner the better. I am at a standstill for want of the material. You might catch the express to Paris tomorrow; no, say the day after tomorrow." She looked at him tenderly. "The parting will be bitter."

"Very bitter," Mr. Eustace Greyne replied.

He felt really upset. Mrs. Greyne laid the hand which had brought them

from Phillimore Gardens to Belgrave Square gently upon his.

"Think of the result," she said. "The greatest book I have done yet. A book that will last. A book that will—"

"Take us to Park Lane," he murmured.

The Rembrandtesque head nodded. The noble features, as of a strictly respectable Roman emperor, relaxed.

"A book that will take us to Park Lane."

At this moment the door opened, and the footman inquired:

"Could Mademoiselle Verbèna see you for a minute, ma'am?"

Mademoiselle Verbèna was the French governess of the two little Greynes. The great novelist had consented to become a mother.

"Certainly."

In another moment, Mademoiselle Verbèna was added to the group beside the fire.

II

We have said that Mademoiselle Verbèna was the French governess of little Adolphus and Olivia Greyne, and so she was to this extent—that she taught them French, and that Mr. and Mrs. Greyne supposed her to be a Parisian. But life has its little ironies. Mademoiselle Verbèna in the house of this great and respectable novelist was one of them; for she was a Levantine, born at Port Said of a Suez Canal father and a Suez Canal mother. Now, nobody can desire to say anything against Port Said. At the same time, few mothers would inevitably pick it out as the ideal spot from which a beneficent influence for childhood's happy hour would be certain to emanate. Nor, it must be allowed, is a Suez Canal ancestry specially necessary to a trainer of young souls. It may not be a drawback, but it can hardly be described as an advantage. This, Mademoiselle Verbèna was intelligent enough to know. She, therefore, concealed the fact that her father had been a dredger of Monsieur de Lesseps's tri-

umph, her mother a bar-lady of the historic coal wharf where the ships are fed, and preferred to suppose—and to permit others to suppose—that she had first seen the light in the Rue St. Honoré, her parents being a count and countess of some old regime.

This supposition, retained from her earliest years, had affected her appearance and her manner. She was a very neat, very trim, even a very attractive little person, with dark-brown, roguish eyes, blue-black hair, a fairylike figure and the prettiest hands and feet imaginable. She had first attracted Mrs. Greyne's attention by her devotion to St. Paul's Cathedral, and this devotion she still kept up. Whenever she had an hour or two free she always—so she herself said—spent it in "*ce charmant St. Paul.*"

As she entered the oracle's retreat, she cast down her eyes and trembled visibly.

"What is it, Miss Verbèna?" inquired Mrs. Greyne, with a kindly English accent, calculated to set any poor French creature quite at ease.

Mademoiselle Verbèna trembled more.

"I have received bad news, madame."

"I grieve to hear it. Of what nature?"

"Mama has *une bronchite très grave.*"

"A what, Miss Verbèna?"

"Pardon, madame. A very grave bronchitis. She cries for me."

"Indeed!"

"The doctors say she will die."

"This is very sad."

The Levantine wept. Even Suez Canal folk are not proof against all human sympathy. Mr. Greyne blew his nose beside the fire, and Mrs. Greyne said again:

"I repeat that this is very sad."

"Madame, if I do not go to mama tomorrow I shall not see her more."

Mrs. Greyne looked very grave.

"Oh!" she remarked. She thought profoundly for a moment, and then added, "Indeed!"

"It is true, madame."

Suddenly, Mademoiselle Verbèna

flung herself down on the Persian carpet at Mrs. Greyne's large but well-proportioned feet, and, bathing them with her tears, cried in a heartrending manner:

"Madame will let me go! madame will permit me to fly to poor mama—to close her dying eyes—to kiss once again—"

Mr. Greyne was visibly affected, and even Mrs. Greyne seemed somewhat put about, for she moved her feet rather hastily out of reach of the dependent's emotion, and made her scramble up.

"Where is your poor mother?"

"In Paris, madame. In the Rue St. Honoré where I was born. Oh, if she should die there! If she should—"

Mrs. Greyne raised her hand, commanding silence.

"You wish to go there?"

"If madame permits."

"When?"

"Tomorrow, madame."

"Tomorrow? This is decidedly abrupt."

"*Mais la bronchite, madame*, she is abrupt, and death, she may be abrupt."

"True. One moment!"

There was an instant's silence for Mrs. Greyne to let loose her brain in. She did so, then said:

"You have my permission. Go tomorrow, but return as soon as possible. I do not wish Adolphus to lose his still uncertain grasp upon the irregular verbs."

In a flood of grateful tears, Mademoiselle Verbèna retired to make her preparations. On the morrow, she was gone.

The morrow was a day of much perplexity, much bustle and excitement for Mr. Greyne and the valet, Darrell. They were preparing for Algiers. In the morning, at an early hour, Mr. Greyne set forth in the barouche with Mrs. Greyne, to purchase African necessities; a small but well-supplied medicine chest, a pith helmet, a white-and-green umbrella, a Baedeker, a couple of Smith & Wesson Springfield revolvers with a due amount of cartridges, a dozen of Merrin's exercise

books—on mature reflection Mrs. Greyne thought that two would hardly contain a sufficient amount of African frailty for her present purpose—a packet of lead pencils, some bottles of a remedy for seasickness, a silver flask for cognac, and various other trifles such as travelers in distant continents require.

Meanwhile, Darrell was learning French for the journey, and packing his own and his master's trunks. The worthy fellow, a man of twenty-five summers, had never been across the Channel—the Greynes being by no means prone to foreign travel—and it may therefore be imagined that he was in a state of considerable expectation as he laid the trousers, coats and waistcoats in their respective places, selected such boots as seemed likely to wear well in a tropical climate, and dropped those shirts, which are so contrived as to admit plenty of ventilation to the heated body, into the case reserved for them.

When Mr. Greyne returned from his shopping excursion, the barouche, loaded almost to the gunwale—if one may be permitted a nautical expression in this connection—had to be disburthened, and its contents conveyed upstairs to Mr. Greyne's bedroom, into which Mrs. Greyne herself presently entered to give directions for their disposing. Nor was it till the hour of sunset that everything was in due order, the straps set fast, the keys duly turned in the locks, the labels—"Mr. Eustace Greyne: Passenger to Algiers: via Marseilles"—carefully written out in a full, round hand. Rook's tickets had been bought, so now everything was ready, and the last evening in England might be spent by Mr. Greyne in the drawing-room and by Darrell in the servants' hall quietly, socially, perhaps pathetically.

The pathos of the situation, it must be confessed, appealed more to the master than to the servant. Darrell was very gay and inclined to be boastful, full of information as to how he would comport himself with "them there Frenchies," and how he would

make "them pore, godless Arabs sit up." But Mr. Greyne's attitude of mind was very different. As the night drew on, and Mrs. Greyne and he sat by the wood fire in the magnificent drawing-room, to which they always adjourned after dinner, a keen sense of the sorrow of departure swept over them both.

"How lonely you will feel without me, Eugenia," said Mr. Greyne. "I have been thinking of that all day."

"And you, Eustace, how desolate will be your tale of days! My mind runs much on that. You will miss me at every hour."

"You are so accustomed to have me within call, to depend upon me for encouragement in your life-work. I scarcely know how you will get on when I am far across the sea."

"And you, for whom I have labored, for whom I have planned and calculated, what will be your sensations when you realize that a gulf—the Gulf of Lyons—is fixed irrevocably between us?"

So their thoughts ran. Each one was full of tender pity for the other. Toward bedtime, however, conscious that the time for colloquy was running short, they fell into more practical discourse.

"I wonder," said Mr. Greyne, "whether I shall find any difficulty in gaining the information you require, my darling. I suppose these places"—he spoke vaguely, for his thoughts were vague—"are somewhat awkward to come at. Naturally they would avoid the eye of day."

Mrs. Greyne looked profound.

"Yes. Evil ever seeks the darkness. You will have to do the same."

"You think my investigations must take place at night?"

"I should certainly suppose so."

"And where shall I find a cicerone?"

"Apply to Rook."

"In what terms? You see, dearest, this is rather a special matter, isn't it?"

"Very special. But on no account hint that you are in Algiers for 'Catherine's' sake. It would get into the papers. It would be cabled to

America. The whole reading world would be agog, and the future interest of the book discounted."

Mr. Greyne looked at his wife with reverence. In such moments he realized, almost too poignantly, her great position.

"I will be careful," he said. "What would you recommend me to say?"

"Well"—Mrs. Greyne knit her superb forehead—"I should suggest that you present yourself as an ordinary traveler, but with a specially inquiring bent of mind, and a slight tendency toward the—the—er—hidden things of life."

"I suppose you wish me to visit the public-houses?"

"I wish you to see everything that has part or lot in African frailty. Go everywhere, see everything. Bring your notes to me, and I will select such fragments of the broken commandments as suit my purpose, which is, as always, the edifying of the human race. Only this time I mean to purge it as by fire."

"That corner house in Park Lane, next to the Duke of Ebury's, would suit us very well," said Mr. Greyne, reflectively.

"We could sell our lease here at an advance," his wife rejoined. "You will not waste your journey, Eustace?"

"My love," returned Mr. Greyne, with decision, "I will apply to Rook on arrival, and, if I find his man unsatisfactory, if I have any reason to suspect that I am not being shown everything—more especially in the Kasbah region, which, from the guidebooks we bought today, is, I take it, the most abandoned portion of the city—I will seek another cicerone."

"Do so. And now to bed. You must sleep well tonight in preparation for the journey."

It was their invariable habit before retiring to drink each a tumbler of barley water which was set out by the butler in Mrs. Greyne's study. After this nightcap, Mrs. Greyne wrote up her anticipatory diary, while Mr. Greyne smoked a mild cigar, and then they went to bed. Tonight, as usual,

they repaired to the sanctum, and drank their barley water. Having done so, Mr. Greyne drew forth his cigar-case, while Mrs. Greyne went to her writing-table, and prepared to unlock the drawer in which her diary reposed, safe from all prying eyes.

The match was struck, the key was inserted in the lock and turned. As the cigar end glowed, the drawer was opened. Mr. Greyne heard a contralto cry. He turned from the arm-chair in which he was just about to seat himself.

"My love, is anything the matter?"

His wife was bending forward with both hands in the drawer, telling over its contents.

"My diary is not here!"

"Your diary!"

"It is gone."

"But"—he came over to her—"this is very serious. I presume, like all diaries, it is full of—" instinctively he had been about to say "damning"; he remembered his dear one's irreproachable character, and substituted "precious secrets."

"It is full of matter which must never be given to the world—my secret thoughts, my aspirations. The whole history of my soul is there."

"Heavens! It must be found."

They searched the writing-table. They searched the room. No diary.

"Could you have taken it to my room and left it there?" asked Mr. Greyne.

They hastened thither and looked—in vain. By this time, the servants were gone to bed, and the two searchers were quite alone on the ground floor of their magnificent mansion. Mrs. Greyne began to look seriously perturbed. Her Roman features worked.

"This is appalling," she exclaimed. "Some thief, knowing it priceless, must have stolen the diary. It will be published in America. It will bring in thousands—but to others, not to us."

She began to wring her hands. It was near midnight.

"Think, my love, think!" cried Mr.

Greyne. "Where could you have taken it? You had it last night?"

"Certainly. I remember writing in it that you would be sailing to Algiers on the *Général Bertrand* on Thursday of this week, and that on the night I should be feeling widowed here. The previous night I wrote that yesterday I should have to tell you of your mission. You know I always put down beforehand what I shall do, what I shall even think on each succeeding day. It is a practice that regulates the mind and conduct, that helps to uniformity."

"How true! Who can have taken it? Do you ever leave it about?"

"Never. Am I a madwoman?"

"My darling, compose yourself! We must search the house."

They proceeded to do so, and, on coming into the school-room, Mrs. Greyne, who was in front, uttered a sudden cry.

Upon the table of Mademoiselle Verbena lay the diary, open at the following entry:

On Thursday next poor Eustace will be on board the *Général Bertrand* sailing for Algiers. I shall be here thinking of myself, and of him in relation to myself. God help us both. Duty is sometimes stern. *Mem.* The corner house in Park Lane, next the Duke of Ebury's, has sixty years still to run; the lease, that is. Thursday—poor Eustace!

"What does this portend?" cried Mrs. Greyne.

"My darling, it passes my wit to imagine," replied her husband.

III

THE parting of Mr. and Mrs. Greyne on the following morning was very affecting. It took place at Victoria Station, in the midst of a small crowd of admiring strangers, who had recognized the commanding presence of the great novelist, and had gathered round to observe her manifestations.

Mrs. Greyne was considerably shaken by the event of the previous night. Although, on the discovery of the diary, the house had been roused and all the

servants closely questioned, no light had been thrown upon its migration from the locked drawer to the school-room table. Adolphus and Olivia, jerked from sleep by the hasty hands of a maid, could only weep and wail. The powdered footmen, one and all, declared they had never heard of a diary. The butler gave warning on the spot, keeping on his nightcap to give greater effect to his pronunciamento. It was all most unsatisfactory, and for one wild moment Mrs. Greyne seriously thought of retaining her husband by her as a protection against the mysterious thief who had been at work in their midst. Could it be Mademoiselle Verbèna? The dread surmise occurred, but Mr. Greyne rejected it.

"Her father was a count," he said. "Besides, my darling, I don't believe she can read English; certainly not unless it is printed."

So there the matter rested, and the moment of parting came.

There was a murmur of respectful sympathy as Mrs. Greyne clasped her husband tenderly in her arms, and pressed his head against her prune-colored bonnet-strings. The whistle sounded. The train moved on. Leaning from a reserved first-class compartment, Mr. Greyne waved a silk pocket-handkerchief so long as his wife's Roman profile stood out clear against the fog and smoke of London. But at last it faded, grew remote, took on the appearance of a feebly executed crayon drawing, vanished. He sank back upon the cushions—alone. Darrell was traveling second with the dressing-case.

It was a strange sensation, to be alone, and *en route* to Algiers. Mr. Greyne scarcely knew what to make of it. A school-boy suddenly despatched to Timbuctoo could hardly have felt more terribly emancipated than he did. He was so absolutely unaccustomed to freedom, he had been for so long without the faintest desire for it, that to have it thrust upon him so suddenly was almost alarming. He felt lonely, anxious, horribly unmar-

ried. To divert his thoughts, he drew forth a Merrin's exercise book and a pencil, and wrote on the first page, in large letters, "*African Frailty. Notes For.*" Then he sat gazing at the title of his first literary work, and wondering what on earth he was going to see in Algiers.

Vague visions of himself in the bars of African public-houses, in mosques, in the two-pair-backs of dervishes, in bazaars—which he pictured to himself like those opened by royalties at the Queen's Hall—in Moorish interiors surrounded by voluptuous ladies with large, oval eyes, black tresses and Turkish trousers of span-gled muslin, flitted before his mental gaze. When the train ran upon Dover Pier, and the white horses of the turbulent Channel foamed at his feet, he started as one roused from a Rip Van Winkle sleep. Severe illness occupied his whole attention for a time, and then recovery.

In Paris, he dined at the buffet like one in a dream, and, at the appointed hour, came forth to take the *rapide* for Marseilles. He looked for Darrell and the dressing-case. They were not to be seen. There stood the train. Passengers were mounting into it. Old ladies with agitated faces were buying pillows and nibbling biscuits. Elderly gentlemen with yellow countenances and red ribands in their coats were purchasing the *Figaro* and the *Gil Blas*. Children with bare legs were being hauled into compartments. Rook's agent was explaining to a muddled tourist in a tam-o'-shanter the exact difference between the words "*Oui*" and "*Non*." The bustle of departure was in the air, but Darrell was not to be seen. Mr. Greyne had left him upon the platform with minute directions as to the point from which the train would start, and the hour of its going. Yet he had vanished. The most frantic search, the most frenzied inquiries of officials and total strangers failed to elicit his whereabouts, and, finally, Mr. Greyne was flung forcibly upward into the *wagon-lit*, and caught by the *contrôleur* when

the train was actually moving out of the station.

A moment later, he fell exhausted upon the pink-plush seat of his compartment, realizing his terrible position. He was now utterly alone; without servant, hair-brushes, tooth-brushes, razors, sponges, pajamas, shoes. It was a solitude that might be felt. He thought of the sea journey with no kindly hand to minister to him, the arrival in Africa with no humble companion at his side, to wonder with him at the black inhabitants and help him through the customs—to say nothing of the manners. He thought of the dread homes of iniquity into which he must penetrate by night in search of the material for the voracious "Catherine." He had meant to take Darrell with him to them all—Darrell, whose joyful delight in the prospect of exploring the Eastern fastnesses of crime had been so boyish, so truly English in its frank, its even boisterous sincerity.

And now he was utterly alone, almost like Robinson Crusoe.

The *contrôleur* came in to make the bed. Mr. Greyne told him the dreadful story.

"No doubt he has been lured away, monsieur. The dressing-case was of value?"

"Crocodile, gold fittings."

"Probably monsieur will never see him again. As likely as not he will sleep in the Seine tonight, and at the morgue tomorrow."

Mr. Greyne shuddered. This was an ill omen for his expedition. He drank a stiff whisky-and-soda instead of the usual barley water, and went to bed to dream of bloody murders in which he was the victim.

When the train ran into Marseilles next morning, he was an unshaven, miserable man.

"Have I time to buy a tooth-brush," he inquired, anxiously, at the station, "before the boat sails for Algiers?"

The *chef de gare* thought so. Monsieur had four hours, if that was sufficient. Mr. Greyne hastened forth, had a Turkish bath, purchased a new dress-

ing-case, ate a hasty *déjeuner*, and took a cab to the wharf. It was a long drive over the stony streets. He glanced from side to side, watching the bustling traffic, the hurry of the nations going to and from the ships. His eyes rested upon two Arabs who were striding along in his direction. Doubtless they were also bound for Algiers. He thought they looked most wicked, and hastily took a note of them for "African Frailty." Beside his sense of loss and loneliness marched the sense of duty. The great woman at home in Belgrave Square, founder of his fortunes, mother of his children, she depended upon him. Even in his own hour of need he would not fail her. He took a lead pencil and wrote down:

Saw two Arab ruffians. Bare legs. Look capable of anything. Should not be surprised to hear that they had—

There he paused. That they had what? Done things. Of course, but what things? That was the question. He exerted his imagination, but failed to arrive at any conclusion as to their probable crimes. His knowledge of wickedness was really absurdly limited. For the first time, he felt slightly ashamed of it, and began to wish he had gone into the militia. He comforted himself with the thought that in a fortnight he would probably be fit for the regular army. This thought cheered him slightly, and it was with a slight smile upon his face that he welcomed the first glimpse of the *Général Bertrand*, which was lying against the quay ready to cast off at the stroke of noon. Most of the passengers were aboard, but, as Mr. Greyne stepped out of his cab, and prepared to pay the Maltese driver, a trim little lady, plainly dressed in black, and carrying a tiny and rather coquettish handbag, was tripping lightly across the gangway. Mr. Greyne glanced at her as he turned to follow, glanced and then started. That back was surely familiar to him. Where could he have seen it before? He searched his memory as the little lady vanished. It was a smart, even a *chic* back, a back that knew how to take care of itself, a back that need not

go through the world alone, a back, in fine, that was most distinctly attractive, if not absolutely alluring. Where had he seen it before, or had he ever seen it at all? He thought of his wife's back, flat, powerful, uncompromising. This was very different, more—how should he put it to himself?—more Algerian, perhaps. He could vaguely conceive it a back such as one might meet with while engaged in adding to one's stock of knowledge of—well—African frailty.

At this moment the steward appeared to show him to his cabin, and his further reflections were mainly connected with the Gulf of Lyons.

Twilight was beginning to fall when, so far as he was capable of thinking, he thought he would like a breath of air. For some moments he lay quite still, dwelling on this idea which had so mysteriously come to him. Then he got up and thought again, seated upon the cabin floor. He knew there was a deck. He remembered having seen one when he came aboard. He put on his fur coat, still sitting on the cabin floor. The process took some time—he fancied about a couple of years. At last, however, it was completed, and he rose to his feet with the assistance of the washstand and the berth.

The ship seemed very busy, full of almost American activity. He thought a greater calm would have been more decent, and waited in the hope that the floor would presently cease to forget itself. As it showed no symptoms of complying with his desire, he endeavored to spurn it and, in the fulness of time, gained the companion.

It was very strange, as he remembered afterward, that only when he had gained the companion did the sense of his utter loneliness rush upon him with overwhelming force: one of the ironies of life, he supposed. Eventually, he shook the companion off with a good deal of difficulty, and found himself installed upon planks under a gray sky, and holding fast to a railing, which was all that interposed between him and eternity.

At first, he was only conscious of grayness and the noise of winds

and waters, but presently a black daub seemed to hover for a second somewhere on the verge of his world, to hover and disappear. He wondered what it was. A smut, perhaps. He rubbed his face. The daub returned. It was very large for a smut. He strove to locate it, and found that it must be somewhere on his left cheek. With a great effort, he took out his pocket-handkerchief. Suddenly the daub assumed monstrous proportions. He turned his head, and perceived the lady in black whom he had seen tripping over the gangway on his arrival.

She was a few steps from him, leaning upon the rail in an attitude of the deepest dejection, with her face averted; yet it struck him that her right shoulder was oddly familiar, as her back had surely been. The turn of her head, too—he coughed despairingly. The lady took no notice. He coughed again. Interest was quickening in him. He was determined to see the lady's face.

This time she looked around, showing a pale countenance bedewed with tears, and totally devoid of any expression which he could connect with a consciousness of his presence. For a moment, she stared vacantly at him, while he, with almost equal vacancy, regarded her. Then a thrill of surprise shook him. A sudden light of knowledge leaped up in him, and he exclaimed:

“Mademoiselle Verbèna!”

“Monsieur?” murmured the lady, with an accent of surprise.

“Mademoiselle Verbèna! Surely it is—it must be!”

He had staggered sideways, nearing her.

“Mademoiselle Verbèna, do you not know me? It is I, Eustace Greyne, the father of your pupils, the husband of Mrs. Eustace Greyne!”

An expression of stark amazement came into the lady's face at these words. She leaned forward till her eyes were close to Mr. Greyne's, then gave a little cry.

“*Mon Dieu!* It is true! You are so altered that I could not recognize.

And then—what are you doing here, on the wide sea, far from madame?"

"I was just about to ask you the very same question!" cried Mr. Greyne.

"My teeth make me bad," she said. "Ah, monsieur, I must go below, to pray for poor mama—" she paused, then softly added, "and for monsieur."

She made a movement as if to depart, but Mr. Greyne begged her to remain. In his loneliness the sight even of a Levantine whom he knew solaced his yearning heart. He felt quite friendly toward this poor, unhappy girl, for whom, perhaps, such a shock was preparing upon the distant shore.

"Better stay!" he said. "The air will do you good."

"Ah, if I die, what matter? Unless mama lives there is no one in the world who cares for me, for whom I care."

"There—there is—Mrs. Greyne," said her husband. "And then St. Paul's—remember St. Paul's."

"Ah, *ce charmant* St. Paul! Shall I ever see him more?"

She looked at Mr. Greyne, and suddenly—he knew not why—Mr. Greyne remembered the incident of the diary, and blushed.

"Monsieur has fever!"

Mr. Greyne shook his head. The Levantine eyed him, curiously.

"Monsieur wishes to say something to me, and does not like to speak."

Mr. Greyne made an effort. Now that he was with this gentle lady, with her white face, her weeping eyes, her plain black dress, the mere suspicion that she could have opened a locked drawer with a secret key, and filched therefrom a private record, seemed to him unpardonable. Yet, for a brief instant, it had occurred to him, and Mrs. Greyne had seriously held it. He looked at Mademoiselle Verbèna, and a sudden impulse to tell her the truth overcame him.

"Yes," he said.

"Tell me, monsieur."

In broken words—the ship was still very busy—Mr. Greyne related the incident of the loss and finding of the diary. As he spoke, a slight change stole over the Levantine's face. It certainly became less pale.

IV

"ALAS, monsieur!" said Mademoiselle Verbèna, in her silvery voice, "I go to see my poor mother."

"But I understood that she was dying in Paris."

"Even so. But, when I reached the Rue St. Honoré, I found that they had removed her to Algiers. It was the only chance, the doctor said—a warm climate, the sun of Africa. There was no time to let me know. They took her away at once. And now I follow—perhaps to find her dead."

Large tears rolled down her cheeks. Mr. Greyne was deeply affected.

"Let us hope for the best," he exclaimed, seized by a happy inspiration.

The Levantine strove to smile.

"But you, monsieur, why are you here? Ah! perhaps madame is with you! Let me go to her! Let me kiss her dear hands once more—"

Mr. Greyne mournfully checked her fond excitement.

"I am quite alone," he said.

A tragic expression came into the Levantine's face.

"But, then—?" she began.

It was impossible for him to tell her about "Catherine." He was, therefore, constrained to subterfuge.

"I—I was suddenly overtaken by—by influenza," he said, in some confusion. "The doctor recommended change of air, of scene. He suggested Algiers—"

"*Mon Dieu!* It is like poor mama!"

"Precisely. Our constitutions are—*are* doubtless similar. I shall take this opportunity also of improving my knowledge of African manners and—and customs."

A strange smile seemed to dawn for a second on Mademoiselle Verbèna's face, but it died instantaneously in a grimace of pain.

"But you have fever now!" cried Mr. Greyne, anxiously.

"I! No, I flush with horror, not with fever! The diary, the sacred diary of madame, exposed to view, read by the children, perhaps, the servants! That footman, Thomas, with the nose of curiosity! Ah! I behold that nose penetrating into the holy secrets of the existence of madame! I behold it—ah!"

She burst into a fit of hysterics, the laughing species which is so much more terrible than the other sort. Mr. Greyne was greatly concerned. He lurched to her, and implored her to be calm, but she only laughed the more while tears streamed down her cheeks. The vision of Thomas gloating over Mrs. Greyne's diary seemed utterly to unnerve her, and Mr. Greyne was able to measure, by this ebullition of horror, the depth of the respect and affection entertained by her for his beloved wife. When, at length, she grew calmer, he escorted her toward her cabin, offering her his arm, on which she leaned heavily. As soon as they were in the narrow and heaving passage she turned to him and said:

"Who can have taken the diary?"

Mr. Greyne blushed again.

"We think it was Thomas," he said.

Mademoiselle Verbèna looked at him steadily for a moment; then she cried:

"God bless you, monsieur!"

Mr. Greyne was startled by the abruptness of this pious ejaculation.

"Why?" he inquired.

"You are a good man. You, at least, would not condescend to insult a friendless woman by unworthy suspicions. And madame?"

"Mrs. Greyne"—stammered Mr. Greyne—"is convinced that it was Thomas. In fact—in fact, she was the first to say so."

Mademoiselle Verbèna tenderly pressed his hand.

"Madame is an angel. God bless you both!"

She tottered into her cabin, and, as she shut the door, Mr. Greyne heard

the terrible, laughing hysterics beginning again.

The next day an influence from Africa seemed spread upon the sea. Calm were the waters, calm and blue. No cloud appeared in the sky. The fierce activities of the ship had ceased, and Mademoiselle Verbèna tripped upon the deck at an early hour, to find Mr. Greyne already installed there and looking positively cheerful. He started up as he perceived her, and chivalrously escorted her to a chair.

Everyone who has made a voyage knows that the sea breeds intimacies. By the time the white houses of Algiers rose on their hill out of the bosom of the waves, Mademoiselle Verbèna and Mr. Greyne were—shall we say like sister and brother? She had told him all about her childhood in dear Paris, the death of her father, the count, murmuring the name of Louis XVI, the poverty of her mother, the countess, her own resolve to put aside all aristocratic prejudices and earn her own living. He, in return, had related his Eton days, his momentary bias toward the militia, his marriage—as an innocent youth—with Miss Eugenia Hannibal-Barker. Coming to later times, he was led to confide to the tender-hearted Levantine the fact that he hoped to increase his stock of knowledge while in Africa. Without alluding to "Catherine" he hinted that the cure of influenza was not his only reason for foreign travel.

"I wish to learn something of men and—and women," he murmured, in the shell-like ear presented to him. "Of their passions, their desires, their—their follies."

"Ah!" cried Mademoiselle Verbèna. "Would that I could assist monsieur! But I am only an ignorant little creature, and know nothing of the world! And I shall be ever at the bedside of mama."

"You will give me your address? You will let me inquire for the countess?"

"Willingly, but I do not know where I shall be. There will be a

message at the wharf. To what hotel goes monsieur?"

"The Grand Hotel."

"I will write there when I have seen mama. And meanwhile——"

They were coming into harbor. The heights of Mustapha were visible, the woods of the Bois de Boulogne, the towers of the Hotel Splendid.

"Meanwhile, may I beg monsieur not to——?" She hesitated.

"Not to what?" asked Mr. Greyne, most softly.

"Not to let anyone in England know that I am here?"

She paused. Mr. Greyne was silent, wondering. Mademoiselle Verbèna drooped her head.

"The world is so censorious. It might seem strange that I—that monsieur—a man, young, handsome, fascinating—the same ship—I have no chaperon—*enfin*——"

She could get out no more. Her delicacy, her forethought touched Mr. Greyne to tears.

"Not a word," he said. "You are right. The world is evil, and, as you say, I am a—not a word!"

He ventured to press her hand, as an elder brother might have pressed it. For the first time he realized that even to the husband of Mrs. Eustace Greyne the world might attribute—Goodness gracious! What might not the militia think, for instance?

He felt himself, for one moment, potentially a dog.

They parted in a whirl of Arabs on the quay. Mr. Greyne would have stayed to assist Mademoiselle Verbèna, but she bade him go. She whispered that she thought it "better" that they should not seem too—*enfin*!

"I will write tomorrow," she murmured. "Au revoir!"

On the last word, she was gone. Mr. Greyne saw nothing but Arabs and hotel porters. Loneliness seemed to close in on him once more.

That very evening, after a cup of tea, he presented himself at the office of Rook near the Place du Gouvernement. As he came in he felt a little

nervous. There were no tourists in the office, and a courteous clerk with a bright and searching eye at once took him in hand.

"What can we do for you, sir?"

"I am a stranger here," began Mr. Greyne.

"Quite so, sir, quite so."

The clerk twiddled his businesslike thumbs, and looked inquiring.

"And being so," Mr. Greyne went on, "it is naturally my wish to see as much of the town as possible; as much as possible, you understand."

"You want a guide? Alphonso!"

Turning, he shouted to an inner room, from which in a moment emerged a short, stout, swarthy personage, with a Jewish nose, a French head, an Arab eye with a squint in it, and a markedly Maltese expression.

"This is an excellent guide, sir," said the clerk. "He speaks twenty-five languages."

The stout man, who—as Mr. Greyne now perceived—had on a Swiss suit of clothes, a panama hat, and a pair of German elastic-sided boots, confessed in pigeon English, interspersed occasionally with a word or two of something which Mr. Greyne took to be Chinese, that such was undoubtedly the case.

"What do you wish to see, sir? The mosque, the bazaars, St. Eugène, La Trappe, Mustapha, the baths of the Etat-Major, the Jardin d'Essai, the Villa-Anti-Juif, the——"

"One moment!" said Mr. Greyne.

He turned to the clerk.

"May I take a chair?"

"Be seated, sir, pray be seated, and confer with Alphonso."

So saying, he gave himself to an enormous ledger, while Mr. Greyne took a chair opposite to Alphonso, who stood in a Moorish attitude looking apparently in the direction of Marseilles.

"I have come here," said Mr. Greyne, lowering his voice, "with a purpose."

"You wish to see the Belle Fatma. I will arrange it. She receives every evening in her house in the Rue——"

"One minute! One minute! You said the something 'Fatma'?"

"The Belle Fatma, the most beautiful woman of Africa. She receives every——"

"Pardon me! One moment! Is this lady——?"

Mr. Greyne paused.

"Sir?" said Alphonso, settling his Spanish necktie, and gazing steadily toward Marseilles.

"Is this lady—well, sinful?"

Alphonso threw up his hands with a wild Asiatic gesture.

"Sinful! La Belle Fatma. She is a lady of the utmost respectability known to all the town. You go to her house at eight, you take coffee upon the red sofas, you talk with La Belle, you see the dances and hear the music. Do not fear, sir, it is good, it is respectable as England, your country——"

"If it is respectable I don't want to see it," interposed Mr. Greyne. "It would be a waste of time."

The clerk lifted his head from the ledger, and Alphonso, by means of standing with his back almost square to Mr. Greyne, and looking over his right shoulder, succeeded at length in fixing his eye upon him.

"I have not traveled here to see respectable things," continued Mr. Greyne, with a slight blush. "Quite the contrary."

"Sir?"

The voice of Alphonso seemed to have changed, to have taken on a hard, almost a menacing tone. Mr. Greyne thought of his beloved wife, of Merrin's exercise books, and clenched his hands, endeavoring to feel, and to go on, like a militiaman.

"Quite the contrary," he repeated, firmly; "my object in coming to Africa is to—to search about in the Kasbah, and the disrep—" He choked, recovered himself and continued, "disreputable quarters of Algiers—hem——"

"What for, sir?"

The voice of Alphonso was certainly changed.

"What for?" said Mr. Greyne, growing purple. "For frailty."

"Sir?"

"For frailty—for wickedness."

A slight cackle emanated from the ledger, but immediately died away. A dead silence reigned in the office, broken only by the distant sound of the sea, and by the hard breathing of Alphonso, who had suddenly begun to pant.

"I wish to go to all the wicked places—all!"

The ledger cackled again more audibly. Mr. Greyne felt a prickling sensation run over him, but the thought of "Catherine" nerved him to his awful task.

"It is my wife's express desire that I should do so," he added, desperately, quite forgetting Mrs. Greyne's injunction to keep her dark in his desire to stand well with Rook's.

The ledger went off into a hyena imitation, and Alphonso, turning still more away from Mr. Greyne, so as to get the eye fuller upon him, exclaimed, in a mixture of Aryan and Eurasian languages:

"Sir, I am a respectable, unmarried man. I was born in Buenos Ayres, educated in Smyrna, came of age in Constantinople, and have practiced as guide in Bagdad and other particular cities. I refuse to have anything to do with you and your wife."

So saying, he bounced into the inner room and banged the door, while the ledger gave itself up to peals of merriment, and Mr. Greyne tottered forth upon the sea front, bathed in a cold perspiration and feeling more guilty than a murderer.

It was a staggering blow. He leaned over the stone parapet of the low wall, and let the soft breezes from the bay flit through his hair, and thought of Mrs. Greyne spurned by Alphonso. What was he to do? Kicked out of Rook's, to whom could he apply? There must be wickedness in Algiers, but where? He saw none, though night was falling and stout Frenchmen were already intent upon their absinthe.

"Does monsieur wish to see the Kasbah tonight?"

Was it a voice from heaven? He turned, and saw standing beside him a

tall, thin, audacious-looking young man, with coal-black mustaches, magnificent eyes, and an air that was half-languid, half-serpentine.

"Who are you?"

"I am a guide, monsieur. Here are my certificates."

He produced from the inner pocket of his coat a large bundle of dirty papers.

"If monsieur will deign to look them over."

But Mr. Greyne waved them away. What did he care for certificates? Here was a guide to African frailty. That was sufficient. He was in a desperate mood, and uttered desperate words.

"Look here," he said, rapidly, "are you wicked?"

"Very wicked, monsieur."

"Good!"

"Wicked, monsieur."

"Right!"

"Wrong, monsieur."

"I mean that it is good for me that you are wicked."

"Monsieur is very good."

"Yes, but I wish to be—that is, to see the other thing. Can you undertake to show me everything shocking in Algiers?"

"But certainly, monsieur. For a consideration."

"Name your price."

"Two hundred pounds, monsieur."

Mr. Greyne started. It seemed a high figure.

"Monsieur thought it would be more? I make a special price, because I have taken a fancy to monsieur. I remove fifty pounds. Monsieur, of course, will pay all expenses."

"Of course, of course."

It was no time to draw back.

"How long will it take?"

"To see all the shocking?"

"Precisely."

"There is a good deal. A fortnight, three weeks. It depends on monsieur. If he is strong, and can do without sleep—"

"We shall have to be up at night?"

"Naturally."

"I shall go to bed during the day, and get through it in a fortnight."

"Perfectly."

"Be at the Grand Hotel tonight at ten o'clock precisely."

"At ten o'clock I will be there. Monsieur will pay a little in advance?"

"Here are twenty pounds," cried Mr. Greyne, recklessly.

The audacious-looking young man took the notes with decision, made a graceful salute, and disappeared in the direction of the quay, while Mr. Greyne walked to his hotel, flushed with excitement, and feeling like the most desperate criminal in Africa. If the militia could see him now!

At dinner he drank a bottle of champagne, and afterward smoked a strong cigar over his coffee and liqueur. As he was finishing these frantic enjoyments, the head-waiter—a personage bearing a strong resemblance to an enlarged edition of Napoleon the First—approached him rather furtively, and, bending down, whispered in his ear:

"A gentleman has called to take monsieur to the Kasbah."

Mr. Greyne started, and flushed a guilty red.

"I will come in a moment," he answered, trying to assume a nonchalant voice, such as that in which a hardened major of dragoons announces that in his time he was a devil of a fellow.

The head-waiter retired, looking painfully intelligent, and Mr. Greyne sprang upstairs, seized a Merrin's exercise book and a lead pencil, put on a dark overcoat, popped one of the Springfield revolvers into the pocket of it, and hastened down into the hall of the hotel, where the audacious-looking young man was standing, surrounded by saucy chasseurs in gay liveries and peaked caps, by Algerian waiters, and by German-Swiss porters, all of whom were smiling and looking choke-full of sympathetic comprehension.

"Ha!" said Mr. Greyne, still in the major's voice. "There you are!"

"Behold me, monsieur."

"That's good."

"Wicked, monsieur."

"Well, let's be off to the mosque."

One of the chasseurs—a child of

eight who was thankful that he knew no better—burst into a piping laugh. The waiters turned hastily away, and the German-Swiss porters retreated to the bureau with some activity.

"To the mosque—precisely, monsieur," returned the guide, with complete self-possession.

They stepped out at once upon the pavement, where a carriage was in waiting.

"Where are we going?" inquired Mr. Greyne, in an anxious voice.

"We are going to the heights to see the Ouled," replied the guide. "*En avant!*"

He bounded in beside Mr. Greyne, the coachman cracked his whip, the horses trotted. They were off upon their terrible pilgrimage.

V

ON the following afternoon, at a quarter to three, when Mr. Greyne came down to breakfast, he found, lying beside the boiled eggs, a note directed to him in a feminine handwriting. He tore it open with trembling fingers, and read as follows:

1, RUE DU PETIT NÈGRE.

DEAR MONSIEUR:

I am here. Poor mama is in the hospital. I am allowed to see her twice a day. At all other times I remain alone, praying and weeping. I trust that monsieur has passed a good night. For me, I was sleepless, thinking of mama. I go now to church.

ADÈLE VERBÈNA.

He laid this missive down and sighed deeply. How strangely innocent it was, how simple, how sincere! There were white souls in Algiers, yes, even in Algiers. Strange that he should know one! Strange that he, who had filled a Merrin's exercise book with tiny writing, and had even overflowed on to the cover after "crossing" many pages, should receive the childlike confidences of one! "I go now to the church." Tears came into his eyes as he laid the letter down beside a pile of buttered toast over which the burning afternoon sun of Africa was shining.

"Monsieur will take milk and sugar?"

It was the head-waiter's Napoleonic voice. Mr. Greyne controlled himself. The man was smiling intelligently. All the staff of the hotel smiled intelligently at Mr. Greyne today; the waiters, the porters, the chasseurs. The child of eight, who was thankful that he knew no better, had greeted him with a merry laugh as he came down to breakfast, and an "*Oh, là, là!*" which had elicited a rebuke from the proprietor. Indeed, a wave of human sympathy flowed upon Mr. Greyne, whose ashy face and dull, washed-out eyes betrayed the severity of his night watch.

"Monsieur will feel better after a little food."

The head-waiter handed the buttered toast with bland majesty, at the same time shooting a reproving glance at the little chasseur, who was peeping from behind the door at the afternoon breakfaster.

"I feel perfectly well," replied Mr. Greyne, with an attempt at cheerfulness.

"Still, monsieur will feel much better after a little food."

Mr. Greyne began to toy with an egg.

"You know Algiers?" he asked.

"I was born here, monsieur. If monsieur wishes to explore tonight again the Kasbah I can—"

But Mr. Greyne stopped him with a gesture that was almost fierce.

"Where is the Rue du Petit Nègre?"

"Monsieur wishes to go there to-night?"

"I wish to go there now, directly I have finished break-lunch."

The head-waiter's face was wreathed with humorous surprise.

"But monsieur is wonderful—superb! Never have I seen a traveler like monsieur!"

He gazed at Mr. Greyne with tropical appreciation.

"Monsieur had better have a carriage. The street is difficult to find."

"Order me one. I shall start at once."

Mr. Greyne pushed away the sunlit buttered toast, and got up.

"Monsieur is superb. Never have I seen a traveler like monsieur."

Napoleon's voice was almost reverent. He hastened out, followed slowly by Mr. Greyne.

"A carriage for monsieur! Monsieur desires to go to the Rue du Petit Nègre!"

The staff of the hotel gathered about the door as if to speed a royal personage, and Mr. Greyne noticed that their faces, too, were touched with an almost startled reverence. He stepped into the carriage, signed feebly, but with determination, to the Arab coachman, and was driven away, followed by a parting "*Oh, là là!*" from the chasseur, uttered in a voice that sounded shrill with sheer amazement.

Through winding, crowded streets he went, by bazaars and Moorish bath-houses, mosques and Catholic churches, barracks and cafés, till at length the carriage turned into an alley that crept up a steep hill. It moved on a little way, and then stopped.

"Monsieur must descend here," said the coachman. "Mount the steps, go to the right and then to the left. Near the summit of the hill he will find the Rue du Petit Nègre. Shall I wait for monsieur?"

"Yes."

The coachman began to make a cigarette, while Mr. Greyne set forth to follow his directions, and, at length, stood before an arch, which opened into a courtyard adorned with orange-trees in tubs, and paved with blue and white tiles. Around this courtyard was a three-story house with a flat roof, and from a bureau near a little fountain a stout Frenchwoman called to demand his business. He asked for Mademoiselle Verbèna, and was at once shown into a saloon lined with chairs covered with yellow rep, and begged to take a seat. In two minutes Mademoiselle Verbèna appeared, drying her eyes with a tiny pocket-handkerchief, and forcing a little pathetic smile of welcome. Mr. Greyne clasped her hand in silence. She sat down in a rep chair at his right, and they looked at each other.

"*Mais, mon Dieu!* How monsieur is changed!" cried the Levantine. "If

madame could see him! What has happened to monsieur?"

"Miss Verbèna," replied Mr. Greyne, "I have seen the Ouled on the heights."

A spasm crossed the Levantine's face. She put her handkerchief to it for a moment.

"What is an Ouled?" she inquired, withdrawing it.

"I dare not tell you," he replied, solemnly.

"But indeed I wish to know, so that I may sympathize with monsieur."

Mr. Greyne hesitated, but his heart was full; he felt the need of sympathy. He looked at Mademoiselle Verbèna, and a great longing to unburden himself overcame him.

"An Ouled," he replied, "is a dancing-girl from the desert of Sahara."

"*Mon Dieu!* How does she dance? Is it a valse, a polka, a quadrille?"

"No. Would that it were!"

And Mr. Greyne, unable further to govern his desire for full expression, gave Mademoiselle Verbèna a slightly Bowdlerized description of the dances of the desert. She heard him with amazement.

"How terrible!" she exclaimed, when he had finished. "And does one pay much to see such steps of the Evil One?"

"I gave her twenty pounds. Abdallah Jack——"

"Abdallah Jack?"

"My guide informed me that was the price. He tells me it is against the law, and that each time an Ouled dances she risks being thrown into prison."

"Poor lady! How sad to have to earn one's bread by such devices, instead of by teaching to the sweet little ones of monsieur the sympathetic grammar of one's native country."

Mr. Greyne was touched to the quick by this allusion, which brought, as in a vision, the happy home in Belgrave Square before him.

"You are an angel!" he exclaimed.

Mademoiselle Verbèna shook her head.

"And this poor Ouled, you will go to her again?"

"Yes. It seems that she is in communication with all the—the—well, all the odd people of Algiers, and that one can only get at them through her."

"Indeed?"

"Abdallah Jack tells me that while I am here I should pay her a weekly salary and that, in return, I shall see all the terrible ceremonies of the Arabs. I have decided to do so—"

"Ah, you have decided!"

For a moment, Mr. Greyne started. There seemed a new sound in Mademoiselle Verbèna's voice, a gleam in her dark brown eyes.

"Yes," he said, looking at her in wonder. "But I have not yet told Abdallah Jack."

The Levantine looked gently sad again.

"Ah," she said, in her usual pathetic voice. "How my heart bleeds for this poor Ouled. By the way, what is her name?"

"Aishoush."

"She is beautiful?"

"I hardly know. She was so painted, so tattooed, so very—so very different from Mrs. Eustace Greyne."

"How sad! How terrible! Ah, but you must long for the dear bonnet-strings of madame?"

Did he? As she spoke, Mr. Greyne asked himself the question. Shocked as he was, fatigued by his researches, did he wish that he were back again in Belgrave Square, drinking barley water, pasting notices of his wife's achievements into the new album, listening while she read aloud from the manuscript of her latest novel? He wondered and—how strange, how almost terrible—he was not sure.

"Is it not so?" murmured Mademoiselle Verbèna.

"Naturally, I miss my beloved wife," said Mr. Greyne, with a certain awkwardness. "How is your poor, dear mother?"

Tears came at once into the Levantine's eyes.

"Very, very ill, monsieur. Still, there is a chance—just a chance that

she may not die. Ah, when I sit here all alone in this strange place, I feel that she will perish, that soon I shall be quite deserted in this cruel, cruel world!"

The tears began to flow down her cheeks with determination. Mr. Greyne was terribly upset.

"You must cheer up," he exclaimed.

"You must hope for the best."

"Sitting here alone, how can I?" She sobbed.

"Sitting here alone—very true!"

A sudden thought, a number of sudden thoughts, struck him.

"You must not sit here alone."

"Monsieur!"

"You must come out. You must drive. You must see the town, distract yourself."

"But how? Can a—a girl go about alone in Algiers?"

"Heaven forbid! No, I will escort you."

"Monsieur!"

A smile of innocent, girlish joy transformed her face, but suddenly she was grave again.

"Would it be right, *convenable*?"

Mr. Greyne was reckless. The dog potential rose up in him again.

"Why not? And, besides, who knows us here? Not a soul."

"That is true."

"Put on your bonnet. Let us start at once!"

"But I do not wear the bonnet. I am not like madame."

"To be sure. Your hat."

And as she flew to obey him, Mr. Eustace Greyne found himself impiously thanking the powers that be for this strange chance of going on the spree with a toque. When Mademoiselle Verbèna returned, he was looking almost rakish. He eyed her neat black hat and close-fitting black jacket with a glance not wholly unlike that of a militiaman. In her hand she held a vivid scarlet parasol.

"Monsieur," she said, "it is terrible, this *ombrelle*, when mama lies at death's door. But what can I do? I have no other and cannot afford to buy one. The sun is fierce. I dare

not expose myself to it without a shelter."

She seemed really distressed as she opened the parasol, and spread the vivid silk above her pretty black-clothed figure; but Mr. Greyne thought the effect was brilliant, and ventured to say so. As they passed the bureau by the fountain on their way out, the stout Frenchwoman cast an approving glance at Mademoiselle Verbèna.

"The little rat will not see much more of the little negro now," she murmured to herself. "After all, the English have their uses."

VI

IN Belgrave Square, Mrs. Eustace Greyne was beginning to get slightly uneasy. Several things combined to make her so. In the first place, Mademoiselle Verbèna had never returned from her mother's Parisian bedside, and had not even written a line to say how the dear parent was and when the daughter's nursing occupation was likely to be over. In the second place, Adolphus, in consequence of the Levantine's absence, had totally lost his grasp, always uncertain, upon the irregular verbs. In the third place, Darrell, the valet, had returned to London the day after his departure from it, minus not only his master's dressing-case, but minus everything he possessed. His story was that, while waiting at the station in Paris for his master's appearance, he had entered into conversation with an agreeable stranger, and been beguiled into the acceptance of an absinthe at a café just outside. After swallowing the absinthe, he remembered nothing more till he came to himself in a deserted waiting-room at the Gare du Nord, back to which he had been mysteriously conveyed. In his pocket was no money, no watch, only the return half of a second-class ticket from London to Paris. He, therefore, wandered about the streets till morning broke, and then came back to London, a crest-fallen and miserable man, bemoaning his untoward fate, and cursing "them

blasted Frenchies" from the bottom of his British heart.

Mrs. Greyne's anxiety on her husband's behalf, now that he was thrown absolutely unattended upon the inhospitable shores of Africa, was not lessened by a fourth circumstance, which indeed worried her far more than all the others put together. This was Mr. Greyne's prolonged absence from her side. Precisely one calendar month had now elapsed since he had buried his face in her prune bonnet-strings at Victoria Station, and there seemed no prospect of his return. He wrote to her, indeed, frequently, and his letters were full of wistful regret and longing to be once more safe in the old home-stead in Belgrave Square, drinking barley water and pasting Romeike & Curtice notices into the new album which lay, gaping for him, upon the table of his sanctum. But he did not come; nay, more, he wrote plainly that there was no prospect of his coming for the present. It seemed that the wickedness of Africa was very difficult to come at. It did not lie upon the surface, but was hidden far down in depths to which the ordinary tourist found it almost impossible to penetrate. In his numerous letters, Mr. Greyne described his heroic and unremitting exertions to fill the Merrin's note-books with matter that would be suitable for the purging of humanity. He set out in full his interview with Alphonso at the office of Rook, and his definite rejection by that cosmopolitan official. According to the letters, after this event he had spent no less than a fortnight searching in vain for any sign of wickedness in the Algerian capital. He had frequented the cafés, the public bars, the theatres, the churches. He had been to the Velodrome. He had sat by the hour in the Jardin d'Essai. At night he had strolled in the fairs and hung about the circus. Yet nowhere had he been able to perceive anything but the most innocent pleasure, the simple merriment of a gay and guileless population to whom the idea of crime seemed as foreign as the idea of singing the English national anthem.

During the third week it was true that matters—always according to Mr. Greyne's letters home—slightly improved. While walking near the quay, in active search for nautical outrage, he saw an Arab dock laborer, who had been over-smoking kief, run amuck and knock down a couple of respectable snake-charmers who were on the point of embarkation for Tunis with their reptiles. This incident had filled up a half-score of pages in exercise-book number one, and had flooded Mr. Greyne with hope and aspiration. But it was followed by a stagnant lull which had lasted for days, and had only been disturbed by the trifling incident of a gentleman in the Jewish quarter of the town setting fire to a neighbor's bazaar, in the very natural endeavor to find a French halfpenny, which he had chanced to drop among a bale of carpets while looking in to drive a soft bargain. As Mrs. Greyne wired to Algiers, such incidents were of no value to "Catherine."

A very active interchange of views had gone on between the husband and wife as time went by, and the book was at a standstill. At first, Mrs. Greyne contented herself with daily letters, but latterly she had resorted to wires, explanatory, condemnatory, hortatory and even comminatory. She began bitterly to regret her husband's well-proven innocence, and wished she had despatched an uncle of hers by marriage, an ex-captain in the Royal Navy who, she began to feel certain, would have been able to find far more frailty in Algiers than poor Eustace, in his simplicity, would ever come at. She even began to wish that she had crossed the sea in person, and herself boldly set about the ingathering of the material for which she was so impatiently waiting.

Her uneasiness was brought to a head by a letter from a house-agent, stating that the corner mansion in Park Lane next to the Duke of Ebury's was being nibbled at by a Venezuelan millionaire. She wired this terrible fact at once to Africa, adding—at an enormous expenditure of cash:

This will never do. You are too innocent, and cannot see what lies before you. Obtain assistance. Go to the British consul.

Mr. Greyne at once cabled back:

Am following your advice. Will wire result. Regret my innocence, but am distressed that you should so utterly condemn it.

Upon receiving this telegram at night before a lonely dinner, Mrs. Eustace Greyne was deeply moved. She felt she had been hasty. She knew that to very few women was it given to have a husband so free from all masculine infirmities as Mr. Greyne. At the same time there was "Catherine," there was the mansion in Park Lane, there was the Venezuelan millionaire. She began to feel distracted, and, for the first time in her life, refused to partake of sweetbreads fried in mushroom catchup, a dish which she had greatly affected from the time when she wrote her first short story. While she was in the very act of waving away this delicacy, a footman came in with a foreign telegram. She opened it quickly, and read as follows:

British consul horrified; was ignominiously expelled from consulate; great scandal; am much upset, but will never give in, for your sake.

EUSTACE.

As the dread meaning of these words penetrated at length to Mrs. Greyne's voluminous brain, a deep flush overspread her noble features. She rose from the table with a determination that struck awe to the hearts of the powdered underlings, and, drawing herself up to her full height, exclaimed:

"Send Mrs. Forbes at once to my study, if you please—at once, do you understand?"

In a moment Mrs. Forbes, who was the great novelist's maid, appeared on the threshold of the oracle's lair. She was a sober-looking, black-silk personage, who always wore a pork-pie cap in the house, and a Mother Hubbard bonnet out of it. Having been in service with Mrs. Greyne ever since the latter penned her last minor poetry—Mrs. Greyne had been a minor poet for three years soon after she put her hair up—Mrs. Forbes had acquired a certain lit-

erary expression of countenance, and a manner that was decidedly prosy. She read a good deal after her supper of an evening, and was wont to be the arbiter when any literary matter was discussed in the servants' hall.

"Madam?" she said, respectfully entering the room and bending the pork-pie cap forward in an attentive attitude.

Mrs. Greyne was silent for a moment. She appeared to be thinking deeply. Mrs. Forbes gently closed the door, and sighed. It was nearly her supper time, and she felt pensive.

"Madam?" she said again.

Mrs. Greyne looked up. A strange fire burned in her large eyes.

"Mrs. Forbes," she said, at length, with weighty deliberation, "the mission of woman in the world is a great one."

"Very true, madam. My own words to Butler Phillips no longer ago than dinner this midday."

"It is the protecting of man—neither more nor less."

"My own statement, madam, to Second Footman Archibald, this self-same day at the tea board."

"Man needs guidance and looks for it to us—or, rather, to me."

At the last word, Mrs. Forbes pinched her lips together and appeared older than her years, and sourer than her normal temper.

"At this moment, Mrs. Forbes," continued Mrs. Greyne, with rising fervor, "he looks for it to me from Africa. From that dark continent he stretches forth his hands to me in humble supplication."

"Mr. Greyne has not been taken with another of his bilious attacks, I hope, madam?" said Mrs. Forbes.

Mrs. Greyne smiled. The ignorance of the humbly born entertained her. It was so simple, so transparent.

"You fail to understand me," she answered. "But never mind. Others have done the same."

She thought of her reviewers. Mrs. Forbes smiled. She also could be entertained.

"Madam?" she inquired once more, after a pause.

"I shall leave for Africa tomorrow

morning," said Mrs. Greyne. "You will accompany me."

There was a dead silence.

"You will accompany me. Do you understand? Obtain assistance from the housemaids in the packing. Select my quietest gowns, my least conspicuous bonnets. I have my reasons for wishing, while journeying to Africa and remaining there, to pass, if possible, unnoticed."

Again there was a pause. Mrs. Greyne looked up at Mrs. Forbes, and observed a dogged expression upon her countenance.

"What is the matter?" she asked the maid.

"Do we go by Paris, madam?" said Mrs. Forbes.

"Certainly."

"Then, madam, I'm very sorry, but I couldn't risk it, not if it was ever so—"

"Why not? Why this fear of Lutetia?"

"Madam, I'm not afraid of any Lutetia as ever wore apron, but, to go to Paris to be drugged with absint, and put away in a third-class waiting-room like a package, I couldn't, madam, not even if I have to leave your service."

Mrs. Greyne recognized that the episode of the valet had struck home to the lady's maid.

"But you will not leave my side."

"They will absint you, madam."

"But you will travel first in a sleeping-car."

Mrs. Forbes put up her hand to her pork-pie cap, as if considering.

"Very well, madam, to oblige you I will undergo it," she said, at length. "But I would not do the like for another living lady."

"I will raise your wages. You are a faithful creature."

"Does master expect us, madam?" asked Mrs. Forbes, as she prepared to retire.

A bright and tender look stole into Mrs. Greyne's intellectual face.

"No," she replied.

She turned her large and beaming eyes full upon the maid.

"Mrs. Forbes," she said, with an

amount of emotion that was very rare in her, "I am going to tell you a great truth."

"Madam?" said Mrs. Forbes, respectfully.

"The sweetest moments of life, those which lift man nearest heaven and make him thankful for the great gift of existence, are sometimes those which are unforeseen."

She was thinking of Mr. Greyne's ecstasy when, upon the inhospitable African shore where he was now enduring such tragic misfortunes, he perceived the majestic form of his loved one—his loved one whom he believed to be in Belgrave Square—coming toward him to soothe, to comfort, to direct. She brushed away a tear.

"Go, Mrs. Forbes," she said.

And Mrs. Forbes retired, smiling.

An epic might well be written on the great novelist's journey to Africa, upon her departure from Charing Cross, shrouded in a black gauze veil, her silent thought as the good ship *Empress* rode cork-like upon the Channel waves, her ascetic lunch—a captain's biscuit and a glass of water—at the buffet at Calais, her arrival in Paris when the shades of night had fallen. An epic might well be written. Perhaps some day it will be, by herself.

In Paris she suffered a good deal on account of Mrs. Forbes, who, in her fear of "absint," became hysterical, and caused not a little annoyance by accusing various inoffensive French travelers of nefarious designs upon her property and person. In the Gulf of Lyons she suffered even more, and as, unluckily, the wind was contrary and the sea prodigious during the whole of the passage across the Mediterranean, both she and Mrs. Forbes arrived at Algiers four hours late, in a condition which may be more easily imagined than properly described.

Genius in thrall to the body, and absolutely dependent upon green chartreuse for its flickering existence, is no subject for even a sympathetic pen. Sufficient to say that, when the ship came in under the lights of Algiers, the crowd of shouting Arabs was struck to

silence by the spectacle of Mrs. Greyne and Mrs. Forbes endeavoring to disembark, in bonnets that were placed seaward upon the head instead of landward, unbuttoned boots, and gowns soaked with the attentions of the waves.

After being gently and permanently relieved of their light hand-luggage, the mistress and maid, who seemed greatly overwhelmed by the sight of Africa, and who moved—or rather were carried—as in a dream, were placed reverently in the nearest omnibus and conveyed to the farthest hotel, which was situated upon a lofty hill above the town. Here a slightly painful scene took place.

Having been assisted by the staff into a Moorish hall, Mrs. Greyne inquired in a reticent voice for her husband, and was politely informed that there was no person of the name of Greyne in the hotel. For a moment, she seemed threatened with dissolution, but with a supreme effort calling upon her mighty brain she surmised that her husband was possibly passing under a pseudonym in order to throw America off the scent. She therefore demanded to have the guests then present in the hotel at once paraded before her. As there was some difficulty about this—the guests being then at dinner—she whispered for the visitors' book, thinking that perchance Mr. Greyne had inscribed his name there, and that the staff, being foreign, did not recognize it as murmured by herself. The book was brought, upon its cover in golden letters the words: "Hôtel Loubet et Majestic." Then explanations of a somewhat disagreeable nature occurred, and Mrs. Greyne and Mrs. Forbes, after a heavy payment had been exacted for their conveyance to a place they had desired not to go to, were carried forth and consigned to another vehicle which at length brought them, on the stroke of nine, to the Grand Hotel.

Having been placed reverently in the brilliantly lighted hall, they were surrounded by the proprietor, the *maître d'hôtel* and his assistants, the porters, and the chasseurs, with all of whom Mr. Greyne was now familiar. Brandy

and water having been supplied, together with smelling-salts and burnt feathers, Mrs. Greyne roused herself from an acute attack of lethargy and asked for Mr. Greyne. A joyous smile ran round the circle.

"Monsieur Greyne," said the proprietor, "who is living here for the winter?"

"Mr. Eustace Greyne," murmured the great novelist, grasping her bonnet with both hands.

The *maître d'hôtel* drew nearer.

"Madame wishes to see Monsieur Greyne?" he asked.

"I do—at once."

A blessed consciousness of Mother Earth was gradually beginning to steal over her. She even strove feebly to sit up on her chair, a German-Swiss porter of enormous size assisting her.

"But Monsieur Greyne is out."

"Out?"

"Yes, madame. Monsieur Greyne is always out at night."

The eyes of the little chasseur who knew no better began to twinkle. Mrs. Forbes gave a slight cough. Tears filled the novelist's eyes.

"God bless my Eustace!" she murmured, deeply touched by this evidence of his devotion to her interests.

"Madame says—?" asked the proprietor.

"Where does Mr. Greyne go?" inquired the novelist.

"To the Kasbah, madame."

"I knew it!" cried Mrs. Greyne, with returning animation. "I knew it would be so!"

"Madame is acquainted with Monsieur Greyne?" said the *maître d'hôtel*, while the little crowd gathered more closely about the wave-worn group.

"I am Mrs. Eustace Greyne," returned the great novelist, recklessly. "I am the wife of Mr. Eustace Greyne."

There was a moment of supreme silence. Then a loud, an even piercing, "Oh, là, là!" broke upon the air, succeeded instantaneously by a burst of laughter that seemed to thrill with all the wild blessedness of boyhood. It came, of course, from the little chasseur; it came and stayed. Nothing

could stop it, and eventually the happy child had to be carried forth upon the sea front to enjoy his innocent mirth at leisure and in solitude beneath the African stars. Mrs. Greyne did not notice his disappearance. She was intent upon important matters.

"At what time does Mr. Greyne usually set forth?" she asked of the proprietor, whose face now bore a strangely twisted appearance, as if afflicted by a toothache.

"Immediately after dinner, madame, if not before. Of late, it has generally been before."

"And he stays out late?"

"Very late, madame."

The twisted appearance began to seem infectious. It was visible upon the faces of most of those surrounding Mrs. Greyne and Mrs. Forbes. Indeed, even the latter showed some signs of it, although the large shadow cast over her features by the hind side of her Mother Hubbard bonnet to some extent disguised them from the public view.

"Till what hour?" pursued Mrs. Greyne, in a voice of almost yearning tenderness and pity.

"Well, madame"—the proprietor displayed some slight confusion—"I really can hardly say. The *maître d'hôtel* can perhaps inform you."

Mrs. Greyne turned her ox-like eyes upon the enlarged edition of Napoleon the First.

"Monsieur Greyne seldom returns before seven or eight o'clock in the morning, madame. He then retires to bed, and comes down to breakfast at about four o'clock in the afternoon."

Mrs. Greyne was touched to the very quick. Her husband was sacrificing his rest, his health, nay, perhaps even his very life in her service. It was well she had come, well that a period was to be put to these terrible researches. They should be stopped at once, even this very night. Better a thousand literary failures than that her husband's existence should be placed in jeopardy. She rose suddenly from her chair, tottered, gasped, recovered herself and spoke.

"Prepare dinner for me at once," she said, "and order a carriage and a competent guide to be before the door in half an hour."

"Madame is going out? But madame is ill, tired!"

"It matters not."

"Where does madame wish to go?"

"I am going to the Kasbah to find my husband."

"I will escort madame."

The proprietor, the *maître d'hôtel*, the waiters, the porters, the chasseurs, Mrs. Greyne and Mrs. Forbes all turned about to face the determined speaker.

And there before them, his dark eyes gleaming, his long mustaches bristling fiercely—there stood Abdallah Jack.

VII

MAN is a self-deceiver. It must, therefore, ever be a doubtful point whether Mr. Eustace Greyne, during his residence in Africa, absolutely lost sight of his sense of duty; whether, beguiled by the lively attentions of a fiercely foreign town, he deliberately resolved to take his pleasure regardless of consequences and of the sacred ties of Belgrave Square. We prefer to think that some vague idea of combining two duties—that which he owed to himself, and that which he owed to Mrs. Greyne—moved him in all he did, and that the subterfuge into which he was undoubtedly led was not wholly selfish, not wholly criminal. Nevertheless, that he had lied to his beloved wife is certain. Even while she sat over a cutlet and a glass of claret in the white-and-gold dining-room of the Grand Hotel, preparatory to her departure to the Kasbah with Abdallah Jack, the dozen of Merrin's exercise-books lay upstairs in Mr. Greyne's apartment filled to the brim with African frailty. Already there was material enough in their pages to furnish forth a library of "Catherines." Yet Mr. Greyne still lingered far from his home, and wired to that home fabricated accounts of the singular innocence of Algiers. He even allowed it

to be supposed that his own innocence stood in the way of his fulfilment of Mrs. Greyne's behests—he who could now have given points in knowledge of the world to whole regiments of militiamen!

It was not right, and doubtless he must stand condemned by every moralist. But let it not be forgotten that he had fallen under the influence of a Levantine.

Mademoiselle Verbèna's mother, hidden in some unnamed hospital of Algiers, appeared to be one of those ingenious elderly ladies who can hover indefinitely upon the brink of death without actually dying. During the whole time that Mr. Greyne had been in Africa, her state had been desperate, yet she still clung to life. As her daughter said, she possessed extraordinary vitality, and this vitality seemed to have been inherited by her child. Despite her grave anxieties, Mademoiselle Verbèna succeeded in sustaining a remarkable cheeriness, and even a fascinating vivacity, when in the company of others. As she said to Mr. Greyne, she did not think it right to lay her burdens upon the shoulders of her neighbors. She therefore forced herself to appear contented, even at various moments gay, when she and Mr. Greyne were lunching, dining, or supping together, were driving upon the front, sailing upon the azure waters of the bay, riding upon the heights beyond El-Biar, or, ensconced in a sumptuous private box, listening to the latest French farce at one or another of the theatres. Only one day, when they had driven out to the monastery at La Trappe de Staouëli, did a momentary cloud descend upon her piquant features, and she explained this by the frank confession that she had always wished to become a nun, but had been hindered from following her vocation by the necessity of earning money to support her aged parents.

Mr. Greyne had never seen the Ouled since his first evening in Algiers, but he still paid her a weekly salary, through Abdallah Jack, who explained to him that the interesting lady, in a

discreet retirement, was perpetually occupied in arranging the exhibitions of African frailty at which he so frequently assisted. She was, in fact, earning her liberal salary. Mademoiselle Verbèna and Abdallah Jack had met on several occasions, and Mr. Greyne had introduced the latter to the former as his guide, and had generously praised his abilities; but Mademoiselle Verbèna took very little notice of him, and, as time went on, Abdallah Jack seemed to conceive a most distressing dislike of her. On several occasions he advised Mr. Greyne not to frequent her company so assiduously, and when Mr. Greyne asked him to explain the meaning of his monitions he took refuge in vague generalities and Eastern imagery. He had a profound contempt for women as companions, which grieved Mr. Greyne's Western ideas, and evidently thought that Mademoiselle Verbèna ought to be clapped forthwith into a long veil, and put away in a harem behind an iron grille. When Mr. Greyne explained the English point of view, Abdallah Jack took refuge in a sulky silence, but during the week immediately preceding the arrival of Mrs. Greyne, his temper had become actively bad, and Mr. Greyne began seriously to consider whether it would not be better to pay him a last *douceur* and tell him to go about his business.

Before doing this, however, Mr. Greyne desired to have one more interview with the mysterious Ouled on the heights, to whom he owed the knowledge which would henceforth enable him to cut out the militia. He said so to Abdallah Jack. The latter agreed sulkily to arrange it, and matters so fell out that on the night of Mrs. Greyne's arrival her husband was seated in a room in one of the remotest houses of the Kasbah, watching the Ouled's mysterious evolutions, while Mademoiselle Verbèna—as she herself had informed Mr. Greyne—sat in the hospital by the bedside of her still dying mother. Abdallah Jack had apparently been most anxious to assist at Mr. Greyne's interview with

the Ouled, but Mr. Greyne had declined to allow this. The evil temper of the guide was beginning to get thoroughly upon his employer's nerves, and even the natural desire to have an interpreter at hand was overborne by the dislike of Abdallah Jack's morose eyes and sarcastic speeches about women. Moreover, the Ouled spoke a word or two of uncertain French.

Thus, therefore, things fell out, and such was the precise situation when Mrs. Greyne flicked a crumb from her chocolate brocade gown, tied her bonnet-strings, and rose from table to set forth to the Kasbah with Abdallah Jack.

It was a radiant night. In the clear sky the stars shone brilliantly, looking down upon the persistent convulsions of the little chasseur, who had not yet recovered from his attack of merriment on learning who Mrs. Greyne was. The sea, quite calm now that the great novelist was no longer upon it, lapped softly along the curving shores of the bay. The palm trees of the town garden where the band plays on warm evenings waved lazily in the soft and scented breeze. The hooded figures of the Arabs lounged against the stone wall that girdles the sea front. In the brilliantly illuminated restaurants, the rich French population gathered about the little tables, while the withered beggars stared in upon the oyster shells, the champagne bottles and the feathers in the women's audacious hats.

When Mrs. Greyne emerged upon the pavement before the Grand Hotel, attended by Mrs. Forbes and the guide, she paused for a moment and cast a searching glance upon the fairy scene. In this voluptuous evening and strange environment life seemed oddly dreamlike. She scarcely felt like Mrs. Greyne. Possibly Mrs. Forbes also felt unlike herself, for she suddenly placed one hand upon her left side and tottered. Abdallah Jack supported her. She screamed aloud.

"Madam!" she said. "It is the vertigo. I am overtaken!"

She was really ill; her face indeed became the color of a plover's egg.

"Let me go to bed, madam," she implored. "It is the vertigo, madam. I am overtook!"

Under ordinary circumstances, Mrs. Greyne would have prescribed a dose of Kasbah air, but tonight she felt strange and she wanted strangeness. Mrs. Forbes with the vertigo, in a small carriage, would be inappropriate. She therefore bade her retire, mounted into the vehicle with Abdallah Jack, and was quickly driven away, her bonnet-strings floating upon the winsome wind.

"You know my husband?" she asked, softly, of the guide.

Abdallah Jack replied in French that he rather thought he did.

"How is he looking?" continued Mrs. Greyne, in a slightly yearning voice. "My Eustace!" she added, to herself, "my devoted one!"

"Monsieur Greyne is pale as washed linen upon the Kasbah wall," replied Abdallah Jack, lighting a cigarette, and wreathing the great novelist in its gray-blue smoke. "He is thin as the Spahi's lance, he is nervous as the leaves of the eucalyptus tree when the winds blow from the north."

Mrs. Greyne was seriously perturbed.

"Would I had come before!" she murmured, with serious self-reproach.

"Monsieur Greyne is worse than all the English," pursued Abdallah Jack, in a voice that sounded to Mrs. Greyne decidedly sinister. "He is worse than the tourists of Rook, who laugh in the doorways of the mosques and twine in their hair the dried lizards of the Sahara. Even the guide of Rook rejected him. I only would undertake him because I am full of evil."

Mrs. Greyne began to feel distinctly uncomfortable, and to wish she had not been so ready to pander to Mrs. Forbes's vertigo. She stole a sidelong glance at her strange companion. The carriage was small. The end of his bristling black mustache was very near. What he said of Mr. Greyne did not disturb her, because she knew that her Eustace had sacrificed his

reputation to do her service; but what he said about himself was not reassuring.

"I think you must be doing yourself an injustice," she said, in a rather agitated voice.

"Madame?"

"I do not believe you are so bad as you imply," she continued.

The carriage turned with a jerk out of the brilliantly lighted thoroughfare that runs along the sea into a narrow side street, crowded with native Jews, and dark with shadows.

"Madame does not know me."

The exact truth of this observation struck home, like a dagger, to the mind of Mrs. Greyne.

"I am a wicked person," added Abdallah Jack, with a profound conviction. "That is why Monsieur Greyne chose me as his guide."

The novelist began to quake. Her chocolate brocade fluttered. Was she herself to learn at first hand, and on her first evening in Africa, enough about African frailty to last her for the rest of her life? And how much more of life would remain to her after her stock of knowledge had been thus increased? The carriage turned into a second side street, narrower and darker than the last.

"Are we going right?" she said, apprehensively.

"No, madame, we are going wrong—we are going to the wicked part of the city."

"But—but—you are sure Mr. Greyne will be there?"

Abdallah Jack laughed sardonically.

"Monsieur Greyne is never anywhere else. Monsieur Greyne is wicked as is a mad Touareg of the desert."

"I don't think you quite understand my husband," said Mrs. Greyne, feeling in duty bound to stand up for her poor, maligned Eustace. "Whatever he may have done he has done at my special request."

"Madame says?"

"I say that in all his proceedings while in Algiers, Mr. Greyne has been acting under my directions."

Abdallah Jack fixed his enormous eyes steadily upon her.

"You are his wife and told him to come here and to do as he has done?"

"Ye-yes," faltered Mrs. Greyne, for the first time in her life feeling as if she were being escorted toward the criminal dock by a jailer with Puritan tendencies.

"Then it is true what they say on the shores of the great canal," he remarked, composedly.

"What do they say?" inquired Mrs. Greyne.

"That England is a land of female devils," returned the guide, as the carriage plunged into a filthy alley, between two rows of blind houses, and began to ascend a steep hill.

Mrs. Greyne gasped. She opened her lips to protest vigorously, but her head swam—either from indignation or from fatigue—and she could not utter a word. The horses mounted like cats upward into the dense blackness, from which dropped down the faint sounds of squealing music and of hoarse cries and laughter. The wheels bounded over the stones, sank into the deep ruts, scraped against the sides of the unlighted houses. And Abdallah Jack sat staring at Mrs. Greyne as an English clergyman's wife might stare at the appalling rites of some deadly cannibal encountered in a far-off land, with a stony wonder, a sort of paralyzed curiosity.

Suddenly the carriage stopped on a piece of waste land covered with small pebbles. Abdallah Jack sprang out.

"Why do we stop?" said Mrs. Greyne, turning as pale as ashes.

"The carriage can go no further. Madame must walk."

Mrs. Greyne began to tremble.

"We are to leave the coachman?"

"I shall escort madame, alone."

The great novelist's tongue cleaved to the roof of her mouth. She felt like a Merrin's exercise-book, every leaf of which was covered with African frailty. However, there was no help for it. She had to descend and stand among the pebbles.

"Where are we going?"

Abdallah Jack waved his hand toward a stone rampart dimly seen in the faint light that emanated from the starry sky.

"Down there into the alley of the Dead Dervishes."

Mrs. Greyne could not repress a cry of horror. At that moment she would have given a thousand pounds to have Mrs. Forbes at her side.

Abdallah Jack grasped her by the hand and led her ruthlessly forward. Gazing with terror-stricken eyes over the crumbling rampart of the Kasbah, she saw the city far below her, the lights of the streets, the lights of the ships in harbor. She heard the music of a bugle, and wished she were a Zouave safe in barracks. She wished she were a German-Swiss porter, a merry chasseur, anything but Mrs. Eustice Greyne. One thing alone supported her in this hour of trial, the thought of her husband's ecstasy when she appeared upon the dread scene of his awful labors, to tell him that he was released, that he need visit them no more.

The alley of the Dead Dervishes is long and winding. To Mrs. Greyne it seemed endless. As she threaded it with faltering step, gripped by the feverish hand of Abdallah Jack, who now began to display a strange and terrible excitement, she became a centre of curiosity. Unwashed Arabs, rakish Zouaves in blue and red, wandering Jews of various nationalities, unveiled dancing-girls covered with jewels, stared in wonder upon the chocolate brocade and the floating bonnet-strings, followed upon her footsteps, pointing with painted fingers, and making remarks of a personal nature in French, Arabic and other unknown tongues. She moved in the midst of a crowd, on and on before lighted interiors from which wild music flowed.

"Shall we never be there?" she panted to Abdallah Jack. "My limbs refuse their office." She jogged against a Tunisian Jewess in a pointed hat, and rebounded upon an enormous Riff in a tattered sheepskin. "I can go no further."

"We are there! Behold the house of the Ouled!"

As he uttered the last word he burst into a bitter laugh, and drew Mrs. Greyne, now gasping for breath, through an open doorway into a little hall of imitation marble, with fluted pillars adorned with oilcloth, and walls hung with imported oleographs. From a chamber on the right, near a winding staircase covered with blue-and-white tiles, came the sound of laughter, of song, and of a hideous music conveyed to the astonished ear by pipes and drums.

"They are in there!" exclaimed Abdallah Jack, folding his arms and looking at Mrs. Greyne. "Go to your husband!"

Mrs. Greyne put her hands to her magnificent forehead and tottered forward. She reached the door, she pushed it, she entered. There upon a wooden dais, surrounded by gilt mirrors and artificial roses, she beheld her husband, in a check suit and a white Homburg hat, performing the wildest evolutions, while opposite him a lady, smothered in colored silks and coins, tattooed and painted, dyed and scented, covered with kohl and crowned with ostrich feathers, screamed a nasal chant of the East, and bounded like an electrified monkey.

"Eustace!" cried Mrs. Greyne, leaning for support against an oleograph.

Her husband turned.

"Eustace!" she cried again. "It is I!"

He stood as if turned to stone. Mrs. Greyne hesitated, started, moved forward to the dais and stared upon the Ouled, who had also ceased from dancing, and looked strangely surprised, even confused, by the great novelist's intrusion.

"Miss Verbèna!" she exclaimed. "Miss Verbèna in Algiers!"

"Eugenia!" said Mr. Greyne, in a husky voice, "what is this you say? This lady is the Ouled."

A sardonic laugh came from the doorway. They turned. There stood Abdallah Jack. He advanced roughly to the Ouled.

"Come," he said, angrily. "Have we not earned the money of the stranger? Have we not earned enough? Tomorrow you shall marry me as you have promised and we will return to our own land, to the canal where you and I were born. And nevermore shall the Levantine instruct the babes of the English devils, but dwell veiled and guarded in the harem of her master."

"Mademoiselle Verbèna!" said Mr. Greyne, in a more husky voice. "But—but—your dying mother?"

"She sleeps, monsieur, in the white sands of Ismailia, beside the bitter lake. I trust that madame can now go on with the respectable 'Catherine.'"

And with an ironic reverence to Mrs. Eustace Greyne, she placed her hand in Abdallah Jack's and vanished from the room.

"Catherine's Repentance," published in a gigantic volume not many weeks ago, was preceded by Mr. Eustace Greyne's. When last heard of he was seated in the magnificent library of the corner house in Park Lane next to the Duke of Ebury's, busily engaged in pasting the newspaper notices of Mrs. Greyne's greatest work into a superb new album.

The Abdallah Jacks have returned to the Suez Canal, bearing with them a snug little fortune to be invested in the purchase of a coal wharf at Port Said, and a remarkably handsome crocodile dressing-case, fitted with gold and monogrammed with the initials "E. G."



LIFE'S GRAMMAR

JOHNNY—What is the future of the verb "to marry"?
FATHER—Divorce.

ACHIEVEMENT

By Madison Cawein

WELL, what of it then, if your heart be weighed with the yoke
Of the world's neglect? and the smoke
Of doubt, blown into your eyes, make night of your road?
And the sting of the goad,
The merciless goad of scorn,
And the rise and fall
Of the whip of necessity gall,
Till your heart, forlorn,
Indignant, in rage would rebel;
And your bosom fill,
And sobbingly swell,
With bitterness, yea, against God and 'gainst Fate,
Fate, and the world and all men;
What of it then? . . .
Let it be as it will,
If you labor and wait,
You, too, will arrive, and the end for you, too, will be well.
What of it then? say I; yea, what of it then?

II

Well, what of it then? if the hate of the world and of men
Make wreck of your dreams again?
What of it then,
If contumely and sneer
And ignorant jibe and jeer
Be heaped upon all that you do and all that you dream;
And the irresistible stream
Of events overwhelm and submerge
All effort—or so it may seem? . . .
Not all, not all shall be lost,
Not all, in the merciless surge
And pitiless gurge!
Though you see it tempestuously tossed,
Though you see it sink down or sweep by,
Not in vain did you strive, not in vain!
The struggle, the longing and toil
Of hand and of heart and of brain,
Not in vain was it all, say I!
For out of the wild turmoil
And seething and soil
Of Time, some part of the whole will remain,
In spite of the wrath of the skies
And the hate of men. . . .
What of it then? say I; yea, what of it then?

ELUDED

DEEP in the night I heard
 The rain's mysterious word.
 (It was as if an old love spoke, a dead love sobbed and stirred.)

Deep in the night the great voice of the rain
 Called at my window-pane.
 (A voice more sad shall nevermore sing at my heart again.)

Deep in the night I listened to the cry
 Of the storm sweeping by.
 (It seemed to me I heard a ghost whisper and softly sigh.)

Oh, deep within the night, the last stars gone,
 I heard the rain pass on.
 (No lost love stepped within my room—only the pale, white dawn!)

CHARLES HANSON TOWNE.



THE USUAL PROCESS

“**G**ETTBLUE says that Miss Lightasaire has shaken his ideal of womanhood.”
 “Oh, that means that she has shaken *him*.”



HIS PESSIMICOGITATION

“**I**SUSPECT,” ruminatingly said the Old Codger, apropos of nothing in particular, “that if all men were mind-readers in the full sense of the term, and each was able to realize what every other person he met actually thought about him, there would be very little going on in this world but fights, law-suits and undertaking; and only the helplessly meek, the sublimely egotistical, the genuinely philosophical and the hopelessly idiotic would have any happiness in this life.”

GRAN'FATHER COQUESNE

By Cosmo Hamilton

ON the heights above the village of Givonne, occupied a fortnight before Sedan by squadrons of Prussian cavalry and many regiments of infantry, stood an ancient crucifix. The sun of innumerable summers had shone upon the stone image of the Man of Sorrows. Hundreds of winter storms had frowned upon Him. Spring flowers had sprung up year after year at His feet, and around Him there had been many harvestings as autumn had succeeded autumn.

The Prince of Peace looked down upon a scene which contained no suggestion of flowers or harvestings. In the once unbustling cobbled street stood groups of soldiers. The market-place had become a huge stable, the ancient church the quarters of the staff. A few feeble old villagers slunk here and there among the enemies of their country, a few children stood gazing doubtfully at the horses, a few pale-faced, despairing women hurried on domestic errands.

The Prince of War held the country in his grip.

On the outskirts of the village, a stone's throw from the Meuse, alone, stood the cottage of Gran'father Coquesne, cobbler.

With the war, its rights and wrongs, its horrors, its triumphs, I am not concerned. It is Gran'father Coquesne who concerns me—ex-Sergeant Antoine Marie Armand Coquesne, of the Imperial Guard, upon whose breast Napoleon had pinned with his own hands a medal for distinguished conduct in the field; Gran'father Co-

quesne, cobbler, the man who had lived too long.

Seated on a backless chair beside a tool-bench under the one window of the living-room, bent double over a woman's boot which was pressed between his trembling knees, was an old, gaunt man. His white hair hung down low upon his neck. His lips, beneath a straggling white mustache, trembled feebly. Upon the bridge of his eagle nose rested a large pair of spectacles through which his pale eyes peered uncertainly. The sleeves of his shirt were rolled up to his elbows and a leathern apron, battered and discolored, showed very little of his butcher-blue trousers, which ended at his ankles, bare above his dirty sabots. The strokes of his hammer, as he knocked the nails he took from his toothless mouth into the sole of the boot, were weak. One in three missed the nail and the hammer came down upon his fingers. And as he worked the tears trickled down his high cheek-bones and sunken cheeks, and he kept up a muttering, half-prayerful, half-irritable, wholly impotent.

The sun was setting upon an exquisite September day. Its red glow came in through the little window and fell gently upon the pathetic figure, upon the whitewashed walls of the room and its bare, clean floor. In the shade of the room, five feet from the bench and three from the wall, stood a low, wooden bed, with posts. At the other side of the window a low door stood half-open, and opposite the bed, in an angle of the room, was a short

flight of stairs leading to the two bedrooms above. Its door opened into the room and was hooked back to the wall, which was broken here and there and showed lath and plaster.

A sudden bugle call rang out.

The old man raised his hammer with a gesture of passionate anger.

"Curse you!" he cried, "curse you! Thieves! Robbers! Cowards! Prussians! . . . Why am I too old, *bon Dieu*? Why am I too old? Why do I live to mend boots when my son bleeds for his country? Why am I allowed to linger about, peeling potatoes and carrying water, while our enemies burn our houses and murder our children? . . . Too old to fight—too old! Oh, *bon Dieu, bon Dieu!*"

He gave a shrill yell and his hammer fell feebly upon the boot. With an irritability intensely pathetic he flung the boot and the hammer away from him, buried his face in his hands and swayed himself backward and forward, weeping with rage and sorrow.

"Gran'father! Gran'father!"

The voice was merry, high-pitched and excited. The door was flung back and a hatless boy of eight, in ragged blouse and muddy sabots, dashed in and seized the old man's arm.

"Ah, ha! my little one," said the old man, a look of great affection and pride coming into his eyes. "Ah, ha! my Désiré!"

"Oh, gran'father, come quick!"

The child pulled the old man to his feet. "What is it, my brave one? What is it?"

"Soldiers! soldiers!" cried the boy, tugging the old man to the door. "Look! look!"

With sudden eagerness old Coquesne tottered out and looked back into the village. "Our soldiers? *Mon Dieu*, perhaps they have come, perhaps— But no, Prussians, always Prussians." He threw up his clenched hands and crept back to his chair.

Désiré danced for joy on the step. "Oh, gran'father," he cried, with a thrill of excitement in his clear, piping voice, "aren't they fine, aren't they

grand? And, oh, gran'father, their horses! And look at their helmets; they shine like gold. Hans's helmet shines like gold, too. Are they Prussians like Hans?"

He noticed that the old man had returned to his chair, and for a moment he stood looking at him with a comically solemn reproachfulness. "Don't you like the soldiers, gran'father?" A sob came from the old cobbler, and the boy, with a sudden childish tenderness, ran to his side and flung his arms round the old man's neck.

Gran'father Coquesne held the boy in a passionate embrace and laid his white head upon the slight shoulder. "My little one, my little one!"

"Gran'father?" There was a suggestion of fright in the young voice.

"I am too old, and useless, and worn out. Just when I should be strong and full of fire I am no more use than a little one—no more use than you."

Tears sprang into Désiré's eyes. "I—I don't want to cry, gran'father, but if you hold me so tight, I—"

The cobbler let him loose and kissed his hands and face tenderly. "Ah, but I am sorry! Did gran'father hold him so tight? Ah, but gran'father loves his son's little son, my dearie, my dearie!" He patted the child in a kind of sing-song.

The shadow faded from the boy's face. Some of his excitement returned and he tried to pull himself away. "Gran'father, what do you think I've been doing? What do you think?"

"Ah, ha!" chuckled the old man. "But we take after our father. Mischief, as usual!"

"No, gran'father, only something that made Hans laugh. Gran'father," he whispered in a confidential way, "I was coming back from Mother Ducane's, where I left the boots—"

"Ah, ha!" encouraged Coquesne, as the boy stopped for breath.

"I didn't stop to talk to anybody, because you told me not to—"

"Good, good."

"Only to a cat that was bleeding from its leg."

"Those devils!"

"And as I came round the corner by the forge—why is nobody there now, gran'father? No fire, no sparks?"

"Lebœuf and his sons are better employed," cried the old man exultantly.

"Oh, well, as I came round the corner, who should I see but mama—"

"Your mother?"

"With—" The boy stopped and looked laughingly up into the old man's face. "Guess!"

"I cannot guess, dearie! Tell me. I thought your mother was upstairs, weeping."

"With Hans, gran'father."

"Hans?" cried the old man, startled and incredulous. "Hans Dorf?"

"Yes, gran'father. Hans, my dear Hans!"

The old man clutched the boy's shoulders and a sudden hoarseness came into his voice. "Where were they? Go on!"

"They were walking arm in arm by the river, and Hans's spurs jingled whenever he walked over a stone. I wish I had spurs, gran'father."

"Arm in arm?" The old man looked at the boy with horror in his eyes.

"Yes, gran'father, and I believe mama likes Hans as much as I do. This is the third time I've seen them out walking. I threw a small stone at Hans and he laughed as it hit his helmet. No wonder mama likes Hans. He gives me sweets."

Gran'father Coquesne rose up and pushed the child away. His face was contorted with anger. "Arm in arm with a soldier of the country her husband is fighting!" he muttered. "It's bad enough to be forced to feed this Prussian beast, but for my son's wife to make a friend of him—perhaps even—"

A woman's laugh drifted through the broken window. A man's deeper tones joined in.

"Désiré, I think I hear more soldiers coming. Run upstairs, my little one, and look out of the window. You will see better. Quick, then, quick."

"Oh, gran'father, how jolly!" The boy ran like the wind.

The old man followed him to the stairs. "But be careful, Désiré; do not lean out too far," he called.

The boy clattered up and could be heard crossing the room above. With an expression of fierce hatred and disgust the old man unhooked the door, almost closed it upon himself, and stood peering into the room from the lower stair.

Marie Coquesne pressed her pretty face close against the window for an instant and then stood in a coquettish attitude in the doorway. A big, good-looking Prussian touched her cheek with his finger.

"Don't, Monsieur Hans," said Marie; "someone may see."

"What do I care?" replied Hans, following her into the room and catching hold of her elbows. "Besides, there's no one to see. That's the best of being on the outskirts of the town—ha?"

Marie laughed—a bright, excited ripple. "You were in luck being billeted here, eh, m'sieur?"

"Was I? That remains to be seen."

The old man peered into the room. His face was white and his eyes gleamed fiercely.

"Indeed! How?" asked Marie, struggling slightly.

Hans laughed. "I do not yet know, little sweetheart, how kind you are going to be!"

"Then I have not been kind?"

"Ah, yes, you have been kind—true. But not so kind as I should like."

She looked into his face and made a move. "Are all Prussians so greedy?"

"I am greedy. Give me one more kiss."

"Will that satisfy m'sieur?"

"Yes." The Prussian tilted up her face and kissed it. "No. Another, and another, and another"—he kissed her each time—"and then I am not satisfied."

The old man stamped on the stairs, pretending to come down, and then pushed back the door. Beads of perspiration stood on his forehead and the veins on his temples beat hard.

Marie flung the Prussian's arms away and ran quickly to the table. Hans turned angrily.

"Ah, ha, my father," said Marie.

The old man made an effort to control his voice. "Ah, ha, my daughter!" he replied.

"Ah, ha, m'sieur!" Hans growled.

"It is a fine evening," the old man went on, going close to the Prussian in an oily, deferential manner, "and your soldiers arrive every moment."

"Oh!" said the Prussian rudely; "they do, do they?"

"When are we to lose you, my good friend?"

"Perhaps the end of the week; perhaps not. It doesn't affect you. There are quite enough of us in action to knock over your sorry fellows. They're a feeble, thin-livered lot, old man—poor fighting men, but good runners." He turned away and went toward Marie.

The old man lifted his arms to strike him, with an exclamation of hatred, and then altered his tone to one of banter. "Ah, you think so, m'sieur?"

"Sssh!" said Marie to the Prussian. She had seen the gesture.

"Sssh be hanged!" said the Prussian roughly. "What do I care for this interrupting old dotard! . . . Yes, old man, I do think so. And so will you, in a few short weeks, when our ring is complete and we have your Emperor and his army trapped like rats."

"We shall see, my soldier, we shall see!" replied the old man, trying to bring an easy smile to a mouth made hard with pain. He went over to his bench and shakily lighted a candle-end which stood in its own grease.

"Sst, quick!" said Hans, bending over Marie. "Another."

The woman evaded him deftly, darting a look at the cobbler. "Not now. Presently."

"But when?"

"When he and the boy are in bed."

Hans looked at her eagerly. "You will come to me?" The old man crept nearer, straining his ears. "You will slip down here?"

Marie put her finger on her lips and laughed softly. "Perhaps," she whispered. "But Désiré? Where is he, my father? Surely he is not out still?"

Hans turned away, rubbing his hands and smiling.

"No, no," said the cobbler, hardly able to speak. "He is upstairs. Listen; at this moment he comes down again."

The boy clattered down the bare stairs, calling, "Hans! Where is Hans?"

"Hello, little one!"

Désiré ran to him and jumped on his knee. "I have eaten those sweets you gave me, Hans. I have had no sweets before for a long time, Hans!"

"So, youngster!"

"They were nice—very."

Gran'father Coquesne bore the sight of his son's son on the knee of his enemy as long as he could. Then he shambled forward, with an oily smile, and put his hands on the child's shoulders. "But it is very kind of m'sieur to give the boy some sweets."

"Ah, yes, very kind," echoed Marie.

"Go away, old man."

"I like sweets," said Désiré.

Hans allowed himself a slight leer at the boy's mother. "And I, ha!"

The old man took the child away from the Prussian quickly. "But he is too heavy to nurse, eh, M'sieur Hans? He is growing into a little man now."

The Prussian rose, annoyed. "And I don't think he'll ever be called upon to fight us when he is one. If I know anything, his father will have had enough to last for a good bit." He swaggered to the door.

"Oh, Hans, don't go!" cried the boy.

"What? Oh, I'm going to smoke on the step till supper."

"It will not be long, m'sieur. I will go and get ready to cook it," said Marie.

"So?" replied Hans, smiling at her. "Good, good. I shall be ready."

Marie nodded to him and ran upstairs.

"Wait for me, Hans. I will come, too."

"No, no, Désiré," whispered the old man, clutching his arm. "I do not wish—"

"But, gran'father," whimpered the child, struggling, "I want to go."

"Ah, dearie, but gran'father would have you stay with him."

"Yes, but why mayn't I go?"

"What!" cried the old man; "you love this Hans better than your gran'father?"

"Oh, gran'father!" With an infinitely tender smile the boy clasped his arms round the old man's knees.

"Then stay with me, dearie. See, I want you to help me play a funny joke upon your good friend Hans, that will amuse him. Will you, little one?"

"Oh, yes, gran'father."

The old man, with a gleam of cunning in his eyes, patted the boy's shoulder with a chuckle.

"Then bring me my hammer from the bench, and that large staple of iron you will see by its side."

The boy brought them back eagerly. "I've got them, gran'father. What are you going to do? Tell Désiré!"

"All in good time, my little one, all in good time. But it will be great fun—oh, great fun! He will enjoy it, your friend Hans. Ha! ha! What a joke! What a joke! . . . Now fetch the candle from my bench, and bring it quickly to me by Hans's bed."

"The candle? Yes." The boy darted away.

"But quietly, boy, quietly. We must be mice." He shuffled as he spoke to the space on the farther side of the bed, and with the air of a man almost delirious began hammering the staple into the beam in the wall, on a level with the pillow.

Désiré held the candle close to the wall, trembling with pleasure. "But tell me, gran'father, tell me."

"See, we first drive in the staple so—and so—and so—"

"Yes, yes."

"And then, the staple well and firmly in the wood, you give me the candle to hold."

"Here," said the boy, thrusting the

piece of candle into the old man's hands.

The flame flickered in the old cobbler's unsteady grasp. "And then," he said, almost gaily, "you run—but quietly—to that coil of rope that is hanging to the nail yonder."

"I see it," said the boy.

"You then bring it to me; take the candle again—"

"I've got it, gran'father."

"And then," continued the old man, putting the hammer on the bed, "we tie a great, strong knot through the staple so—and so."

"Go on, go on!" laughed the child, jumping about in his excitement.

"What then, my brave boy, what then? Why then, just to tease your good friend Hans and make him laugh, we put the rope loosely over his pillow, leaving a large loop here, so."

"Yes, yes, gran'father."

"And we then let the rest of the rope hang down in the shadow—so—and there it is, ready for use." He laughed, rubbing his hands gloatingly.

"But is that all, gran'father? That won't make Hans laugh."

"No, my little one, that is only the beginning. The rest of the joke must wait until your good friend Hans goes to bed. Oh, it will be good fun! How your good friend Hans—who so kindly gave you sweets—will enjoy it! You see that coil on the pillow? When he is in bed, asleep—I shall take care that he sleeps soundly—you will creep up and you will very carefully put the rope round his neck, my little one."

"Round his neck?"

"Yes, my little one, yes. What fun! What fun! And then you and I will catch hold of the rope and we will wind it tight on my winch."

"Gran'father! It will hurt him."

"Oh, no, no, it will not hurt. It is only in fun—just a game to tease him—and then we will let go, and see what your good friend Hans will say. Oh, it's a good game, a merry game."

The boy still looked doubtful. "Will he like it?"

Gran'father Coquesne chuckled. "He is a merry fellow, your friend Hans.

He will sit up and see us and burst out laughing. 'Ah, ha!' he will say, 'so it is you, youngster, and the old man, playing tricks. Ha, ha! Good. Very funny. You shall have some more sweets!"

The boy's face lit up. "And he will give me more sweets?"

"Certainly, my little one, certainly."

"Oh, how nice! But, gran'father, mother will send me to bed."

"No," chuckled the old man, with the gleam of cunning again in his eyes. "I have thought of that. I will need you to hold the candle while I finish the boot. But not a word, dearie. You understand?"

"Oh, yes, gran'father. That would spoil everything."

The old man laughed. "It would, dearie, it would indeed. You will be a little mouse."

The child clasped his hands, leaped up and kissed his grandfather, turned to the door and ran toward it gaily.

The old man waited for the door to open and close. Then, with a little cry of senile excitement, he flung his arms up. "Too old to fight—yes! But not yet too old to save the honor of my name and account for one, at least, of the enemies of my country."

II

MARIE came down stairs singing.

The old man pounced upon the hammer, hurriedly took the candle from the bed, and put it back on the bench. In cap and apron Marie entered, crossed the room lightly to the fireplace, and still singing, lifted the lids of the pots, stirring and tasting.

The old man watched her with a look of supreme disgust and contempt. "My daughter is merry tonight," he said cringingly.

"It is time, father. *Mon Dieu!* but we have been dull enough since the war, in all conscience."

The old man peered at her with a queer, sneering expression. "You are merry because you have a feeling that your husband is safe and unhurt?"

"Hey? Oh, Jacques is all right. He'll take care of himself, never fear."

"Ah, but how glad he will be to come back to his little house, and his child and his old father—and his faithful wife!"

Marie dropped a lid from the stove with a clatter. "Oh!" she cried petulantly, "don't keep talking to me when I'm busy. You only make me upset things."

"Ah, but I am sorry, my child. It is good to chat with you once again. For the past few days you have been so busy I have but seldom seen you."

"Well," said Marie shortly, "I've been in all the time, as usual, cooking and scrubbing—always cooking and scrubbing."

"I am not grumbling, my daughter. These are dreadful times, and our poor country bleeds itself to death. It is good to hear you sing again; even I am happier tonight, although I am too old to fight." He chuckled and murmured under his breath, "What fun! What fun!"

"The soup is steaming, father."

"I will light the lamp, my daughter," said the old man, shuffling to the table. "Our friend the enemy is hungry."

"M'sieur Hans! M'sieur Hans!" called Marie, turning the soup into the four plates.

"He is talking to the little one; I will call him."

Going to the door, the old man stood for a moment looking at the stout young Prussian. A glint of fiendish joy was in his eyes. "M'sieur Hans," he said, with an air of great cordiality, "supper, my friend."

The Prussian swung the boy on his shoulder. "About time, too. It's half an hour late tonight, as it is. We're more than hungry—not so, youngster?"

"I am always hungry now, Hans. Mother, mother! Look at me!"

"Hungry or not," said Hans, putting the boy down, "he's heavy. What a pity he's not old enough to fight, eh, old man? Who knows—he might have put me away, hey?"

"Oh, Hans, I wouldn't shoot you!"

With a little cry he couldn't suppress, the cobbler dropped a spoon upon the table. He instantly turned it into a quavering laugh.

"Marie," broke in the old man, with feeble jocularity, "we will give our good friend here a treat. Shall we, Marie?"

"Meaning me, old man?"

"Yes, yes," cried Désiré.

"How, father?"

"I have one bottle of the excellent spirits which Jacques won at the regatta last year. Good, warm spirits, M'sieur Hans. You have been kind to the little one; you shall have it. Yes, but you shall."

"Sssh!"

A sound of galloping horses drifted in through the window.

"Poor devils," said Hans, "they're making a night of it. They'd envy me if they only knew—hey?" He looked at Marie and laughed uproariously.

"But yes, M'sieur Hans," piped the old man, placing the bottle upon the table, having carefully drawn the cork. "Although the fare is poor here we mean well. A glass, my daughter, a glass."

"Brandy, by Bismarck! A glass, my daughter, a glass." He gave an insolent imitation of the old man's treble. "Old man, you're my friend for life."

"I hope so, m'sieur, I hope so."

"This is the first brandy I shall have put in my stomach since we entered your cursed country. This is luck. A glass now, quick."

"M'sieur is dry," said Marie, handing one.

"M'sieur is always dry, my dear. Go on, old man, raise the elbow. Brandy is an old friend of mine."

"Water, M'sieur Hans?" asked Marie.

"No, no!" cried the old man.

"Water? Get out," scoffed the Prussian. "I never play tricks with a friend." He raised the glass to Marie. "Hoch!" he said, and drank with enormous relish. "Ah, but that's the stuff. Why, father, it's as old as you are. How old are you? A hundred?"

The cobbler winced. "A good joke, hey, Désiré?" he said, filling the soldier's glass again and looking at him queerly. "A good joke. How our good friend m'sieur loves his jokes."

"So do we, gran'father." The boy turned to the Prussian, as though about to blurt out the old man's plans.

"Finish the soup, dearie," said the grandfather, touching him on the arm quickly. "It will get cold."

The boy caught the meaning look and laughed uproariously. "Oh, gran'father, what a joke!"

"Why, father," said Marie, "you haven't touched your plate."

"No, no," said the old man, fidgeting about the Prussian's chair, "there are others who need it more than I. I am too old. I do not count. If M'sieur Hans—"

"Try M'sieur Hans," said the soldier, reaching out.

"Mine is all gone, too," said Désiré pathetically.

Hans stopped drinking the soup. "Share this, my youngster. I never expected it."

"No, no," cried grandfather. "M'sieur is too kind."

Hans shook off the feeble hand. "Come on, youngster," he said. "Here you are." He poured half the soup into the child's plate, and turned to his glass to find it filled again. "What! more? I wish all my hosts were like you, old man." He drank it at a draught, and put the glass down empty with a bang.

"Isn't Hans thirsty?" cried the boy.

The old man began stroking the Prussian's sleeve. "Ah, M'sieur Hans, it would have pleased me to have given you a bottle of this every day you are with us."

"Not half so much as it would have pleased me," retorted Hans; and then he broke out into a German song, and beat time on the table with a spoon. Gran'father Coquesne watched him with a growing smile; his fingers twitched convulsively, like the mouth of a cat before it springs upon an unconscious bird.

Marie drew the old man angrily

aside. "Father," she whispered emphatically, "take the bottle away. He will make himself drunk."

"Tush, my child. Prussians cannot get drunk. They have no heads."

"But he is already tipsy."

The old man chuckled. "No, no," he said; "merry, my daughter, only merry."

"Well," said Marie, with a bright spot of anger on each cheek, "I warn you! If you let him finish the bottle I shall be very angry."

The old man broke into a kind of whine. "My Marie couldn't be angry with her poor old father. He means well, he means well."

Marie swung round on her heel, with her head in the air. "Come, Désiré. We will go to bed!"

"Spare the child to me for ten minutes," broke in the old man. "I need his help with a job that must be finished by the morning."

Hans staggered to his feet. "You're not going, sweetheart?"

"Sst! Quiet, stupid!"

"Oh—ah—yes," whispered Hans. "I understand, I understand. Mum's the word. You'll come—mind!"

"Yes, I'll come." Marie went up to the staircase. "Good night, father."

The grandfather had watched and listened eagerly. He stood with twitching fingers, looking sideways at the rope. "God's blessing, my daughter," he cried cordially.

"Good night, M'sieur Hans."

Hans waved his hand. "God's blessing, my daughter," he chuckled.

"Send Désiré soon, father."

"Yes, yes, Marie. A little while. A few short minutes."

The woman's steps echoed through the cottage. Then a door closed.

Désiré, bubbling with pleasure and excitement, made a little run for his grandfather. "Oh, what a joke!" he cried.

"Quietly, my little one, quietly."

"Hans, you must go to bed now."

"What's that, hey! Bed? All in good time, all in good time. Finish old man's bottle first." He drank

again, and the glass fell on the floor. Hans kicked it into a corner, and sat on the edge of the table. "Here, old 'un," he shouted, "take off my boots."

Désiré ran forward. "Let me, Hans; I know the way."

"You one, boy. Old 'un t'other. Here, old 'un."

"But yes, my good friend, instantly." The old man, with a twitch of pain, bent over the thrust-out leg. "They are good boots indeed," he said.

"They're Prussian boots. All good things come from Prussia. No French work for me. These boots never run away."

A rush of blood flooded the old man's face and neck, and a snarl of rage gurgled in his throat. But with a superhuman effort he mastered himself. "M'sieur is right," he said. "M'sieur is always right."

Désiré clapped his hands. "Now, Hans, go to bed."

In a stupid kind of way Hans looked from the old man to the child.

"Hello," he said, with a cunning smile, "you seem devilish anxious for me to go to bed. Washup, hey?"

"Nothing, Hans, nothing," laughed the boy wildly.

Hans lurched across the room toward the bed. "Shouldn't be bit surprised if youngster hasn't made me apple-pie, hey? Oh, I know these youngsters. Was youngster myself once. Hey?"

The old man shuffled quietly in front of him. "The bottle, m'sieur, the bottle. A sin to waste the rest."

Hans stopped and turned around. The old man breathed less heavily. "No intention of wasting, old 'un. Fill my glass. Ho! no glass? Alri', drink out of bottle. Ho! ho! Not first time, hey?" He lifted the bottle to his lips and drank. Then, finding it empty, he flung it with a roar of laughter at the old man. It missed his head by an inch, and fell with a thud against the soft wall.

"Bad shot, my son," laughed the old man.

"Not so much of that 'son,' old man.

Praise God, there's nothing French about me." He yawned. "I say, but I'm sleepy. This brandy has gone to my head, and no mistake. Better snatch forty winks until she—" He pulled himself up and turned blusteringly. "Here, you, get to your beds. Can't have any hammering here to keep me awake." He lurched over to his bed, pitching his tunic on the foot of it.

"Gran'father," cried Désiré, "he's going, he's going!"

"Quiet, little one, quiet." The old man caught the child's eager hand. "We must be mice. . . . No, no, friend Hans, no hammering tonight. You will sleep well tonight, my Prussian, very well. . . . What a joke, hey, little one, what a joke!"

The Prussian, breathing heavily, growled. Désiré tugged eagerly at the old man's hand, pulling him to the table. Even more excited than the boy, the old cobbler blew out the lamp. A long shaft of moonlight streamed in through the window and fell upon the staircase.

Marie opened her door and called, "Désiré, Désiré!"

"Coming, my daughter, coming." He led the boy to the bed, and peered at the snoring soldier, touching him here and there to test the soundness of his sleep. "Hans," he cried, bending low, "Hans, my friend, there is still a drop of the brandy in the bottom of the bottle. . . . No, he sleeps. What a joke, what a joke! Now, little one, the noose. Quietly—we are mice. Over head and round neck, so! Ha!"

The boy stood on tiptoe and slipped the rope over the Prussian's head, lifting it with an effort to do so. A growl was the only result.

"It's round, gran'father. Pull, pull!"

Marie came to the bottom of the stairs and stood, annoyed to find the old man and the boy still up. She was about to call when she saw Gran'father Coquesne slip the rope round the winch and with a feeble yell of triumph wind it madly. Then,

with her hands held convulsively to her mouth to press back a shriek of horror, she heard her lover give a great gurgle, saw his hand drawn against the post of the bed and his legs kick spasmodically.

"Oh, gran'father," cried the boy, clapping his hands, "what a joke! what a joke! Look at his legs! Look at Hans's legs!"

The old man laughed deliriously, and then flung up his hand in salute, with an almost superb gesture. "For the honor of my country and my son!" he cried, and crossed himself. And then, breaking into feverish laughter again, he shuffled his feet about in a kind of dance.

"You've hurt him, gran'father!" cried the child fearfully.

"Ah! ha! What a joke! Your good friend Hans, he likes a joke. Ho! ho!"

"But, gran'father, he does not sit up and say, 'Ah, ha! You are clever, you are funny!'"

The old man shuffled across to the bed and touched the twitching body. "Not tonight, my dearie. He is too tired. He sleeps well."

"Oh, gran'father," whimpered the boy, "but where is the joke?"

The old man stifled a chuckle, and turned the boy away from the bed to prevent his catching sight of the staring, glazed eyes, the bulging lips of the strangled man. "But you shall have your sweets, my little one. Oh, yes, you shall have them, never fear. Run to bed now, and pray for your father—your father whose good name is saved!"

As he bent down to kiss the child's cheeks the woman tottered forward and went behind the door.

"Good night, dear gran'father."

"Good night, my little one, good night. The holy Virgin and all the angels guard your rest."

He waited in the middle of the room until the boy's step reached the top stair and he heard the door above open. Then, exultantly, he made his way to the bed, and began to untie the rope round the neck of the dead Prussian.

"Now, now, old man, aged a hundred, you who are too old to fight—we shall see. You may be too old, old man, but you have satisfactorily accounted for one of your country's enemies. Ah, ha! . . . Rope under the arms, tight, so—and now, with all your strength—"

He pulled at the heavy body. It fell off the low bed upon the floor with a thud.

"And now, to the river—to the

river. What a joke, what a joke! Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

Chuckles like a child, and pulling like a maniac, the old man got the body to the door of the cottage. Opening the door he pulled the body out, and shut it. The latch fell with a snap. The Last Post sang through the air from the village. The woman fell flat upon her face in the shaft of moonlight. A faint chuckling drifted in through the broken window.



A LOVE LETTER

DEAR ADELINE: Your grace hath lent
To life new charm. Of old, I bent
Above a dark and toilsome way
With empty heart. By naught made gay,
When Duty becked, in grief I went.

And then—you came! The clouds were rent;
The roses bloomed with rarer scent
Beneath your smile. The world was May,
Dear Adeline.

But one thing lacks. To crown content,
Defer no more the glad event.
Come, sweetheart, name the happy day.
When next you write, a postscript, pray—
A word or two to give consent,
Dear, add a line!

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT

LOTTIE G.—A pretty gift for a friend starting on an ocean voyage is a motto to hang in his steamer state-room. It will prove a pleasing reminder of you and your kind thoughtfulness. Work the motto on perforated cardboard with red and brown worsted. Then frame it in a black walnut "rustic" frame. An appropriate motto to select for this purpose is:

YOU CANNOT EAT YOUR CAKE AND HAVE IT, TOO.

CAROLYN WELLS.

THE PHILOSOPHERS OF THE GO-CART

By Geraldine Anthony

I SAID to Amy: "I have come to the lamentable conclusion that it costs more—*much* more—to live in our own hut in the country than to exist in a flat in the city. I fear our long dream of rural felicity is o'er."

"I knew from the look of your hair that you had been doing accounts," said my friend sadly, "but don't for mercy's sake ask me to go over them."

"Here it is twelve o'clock," I pursued, "and the breakfast dishes are still on the table, garnished with flies of assorted sizes. The beds are not made, and unless you have groomed Paul—which I doubt—he is still covered with yesterday's mud."

"Oh, yes, poor Paul! I will take the broom and sweep him off at once," cried Amy, jumping to her feet.

"Not until you have helped me to dispose of this mess, I beg," I interposed hastily.

"Why haven't we a pig?" sighed Amy, surveying the table. "I would gladly pick up the cloth by the corners and sling the whole business into the pen, dishes and all."

"It seems to me that our only cause for thanksgiving is that our live stock is limited to Paul," I replied with acrimony. "As it is, we are little but burnt offerings to a calico pony. Had it not been for the ill-judged loan of Paul, we should never have taken a house in the country, Maria would not have left us on account of the loneliness, and we should be spared the embarrassment of facing the butcher and the vegetable man in person."

"I can't think how it is that we owe them so much money," said Amy. "I'm sure we never have anything de-

cent to eat. Why does it cost us so much more to live than it did in the apartment?"

"Well, for one thing, people were always asking us out to luncheon and dinner," said I. "Halcyon days! I didn't half appreciate them until I had subsisted for four months upon freshly killed veal and pounded steak, cooked over a wood stove. Really, I'm surprised that Maria stood that stove so long."

"She kept thinking we would go back," said Amy, "and when that hope failed she departed. If it were not for Paul, I'd turn the key in the door and follow her. Oh, why did we long to be pastoral, when we might be sitting in Delmonico's window at this moment, looking out at the beautiful pavements and ordering lobster à la Newburg, and *filet mignon*, with pistache ice-cream to top off with? I'm a cockney, and I'm proud of it, and I consider this the most diabolical vacation I have ever had. Why, it will take us the rest of our natural lives to recover from it."

"But we have had Paul," said I, "and as we have him still, we must continue to bear it until our six months' lease expires—or we do. Besides, if we go, we must pay that wretched butcher, and that will leave us nothing to go with."

"And if we stay, we must get another Maria. I am going to town."

"Not without me."

"Someone must stay here to take care of Paul."

"A husband and six children would be less care to us than that blessed beast," I groaned. "Not content with

burying us in the country, he requires our constant society. We haven't read, we haven't made over our clothes, we haven't practiced, all on account of Paul; and fondly as I love him, I begin to feel that your Uncle John might have been in better business than lending him to us."

Amy sighed, and began to remove the breakfast dishes with the tips of her reluctant fingers. I looked sadly at the corner where my guitar and her violin reposed in their cases. I always feel musically inclined when I have no time to practice.

It was very hot. The locusts were shrilling in the dusty trees, and an idiotic hen set up a cackling in my nasturtium bed. In a corner of the kitchen stood a great basket of unironed clothes, left by the deserter, Maria, and under the shed reposed our one vehicle, splashed with the mud of yesterday's thunderstorm. The boy who "chored" for us had forgotten to wash it, as usual. I went to visit Paul, who, though busily engaged in crib-biting, received me cordially, nosed my pocket for sugar, browsed my hair in a playful fashion, and didn't object when I swept him off with the broom. Paul was an animal of parts. His only vice was running away, which he did on the slightest provocation, but we didn't mind that. In fact, it was the sole excitement we had. It was while I was brushing out his beautiful flowing tail that my great idea began to take shape in my mind, but I developed it in silence, not knowing how it would strike my partner in domestic misery. I went back and took a lengthened survey of our runabout. I found that, besides a space in the rear there was room for a goodly box under the seat. Then I dragged my weary members back to the house, and lighted a fire in the wood stove.

"What are you going to do?" asked Amy. "We don't want any luncheon. I have just finished these dishes, and hereafter I shall eat no more, for not even the pangs of hunger will induce me to wash them again."

"I am going to iron these clothes

and put them into our trunks," said I. "I feel that we need a vacation."

"We do indeed," she agreed, "but how are we to escape from our present holiday?"

"We will close the house," said I, "pay the butcher, express our heavy baggage to my sister at Pensico; then, having scarcely any money left to tide us over until the first of October, we will harness our good steed to the go-cart, with as little luggage as possible, and take to the road."

"And sing for our supper, like little Tommy Tucker?" Amy demanded.

"Even so. I have always longed to be a wandering minstrel. Now is my opportunity."

"Let us start at once!" cried Amy. "I already see myself captivating audiences on hotel piazzas. What shall we play? Nothing classical, of course, but popular and sentimental."

"Hold! Not so fast!" said I. "We must first have a road map and a compass. I should dislike to journey South under the impression that I was heading due North."

"I will draw you a map," said Amy, seizing a pencil and the butcher's book. "See, here is Matapan—dreadful little hole!—and here is Pensico—adorable spot!—and all we need to remember is that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points."

"Unfortunately the road-builders may not have seen the necessity of direct communication between Matapan and Pensico, and I doubt if Paul's accomplishments include flying."

"I wouldn't throw cold water on my own plan," said Amy severely. "Get a map if you choose to squander money in that way when you have an English tongue in your head."

"It might be as well to find out where the hotels are," I suggested meekly.

"There is something in that," Amy admitted. "Why do you fuss with those things? I'm going to practice."

II

WE had intended to start on Thursday, but Wednesday proved such a

fine day that we were unwilling to wait, and the expressman chanced to come early, which seemed like a gentle hint from Fate; so we hastily harnessed Paul, packed the runabout and turned the key in the door.

"We can mail it to the landlord if we don't have to come back before our lease expires," I said, dropping it into my pocket. Amy picked up the reins and clucked to Paul, who had marigolds thrust into his head-band, and pranced skittishly. We bumped over a "thank-you-marm" and at length found ourselves upon the high-road.

I leaned back and shook my fist at our deserted house, standing smug and respectable among its dusty verdure. In my triumph I warbled, "Good-bye forever, good-bye, good-bye!" But Amy, who is superstitious, stopped me by the dreadful suggestion that Paul would cast a shoe in the next mile, and that an ignominious return would be our guerdon for thus challenging Fate.

We were now on the eastern boundary of New York State, but our first morning's journey took us over the Connecticut line, and as soon as we felt that Paul had really shaken the dust of Matapan from his hoofs we drew up under the roadside shade, and ate our luncheon, while our pampered steed rested and grazed near us.

"We must have come about fifteen miles," said Amy, devouring her third sandwich. "Here comes a farmer with an ox-team. I'll hold Paul, while you ask him how far it is to Matapan."

"Matapan? Oh, about six mile," said the farmer reflectively.

"Only six miles! Then what did that signpost mean? Aren't we in Connecticut?"

"Yes, but you ain't very *far* in," said our friend.

"Goodness, we ought to be getting along then," said I, "or at this rate we shall spend the night on the road."

We had not driven more than fifteen minutes before we came to a stream that made a loop beside the

road, and as we were watering Paul there another countryman drove his horse into the ford beside us.

"How far are we from Matapan?" I asked.

"Wal, it may be about eighteen mile from here," he said.

"There, now!" said Amy. "I knew that first man was wrong."

After we had driven for another hour, in the hottest part of the afternoon, we met an old man in overalls riding a bicycle.

"How far is it to Matapan?" we inquired of him.

"Seven miles," he called back at us.

Amy and I looked at each other aghast. According to the sun and the road map we had been going steadily eastward, yet we seemed to be almost nearer Matapan than we were when we started.

"I have it!" I said presently.

"Each man told us the distance from his own house to Matapan, no matter how far away from it he may be." It was a forlorn hope of a theory, but it cheered us mightily, and we afterward found it to be quite correct. At all events we drove into Walford, our settled destination, at about six o'clock, and then we knew that we must have come twenty-two miles since morning.

Walford had a village street, with wide stretches of turf between the road and the sidewalk, and double rows of stately elms arching over them like cloisters. There was a little hotel setting fairly on the street, with a narrow white piazza where summer boarders were rocking and waiting for their tea.

"This looks nice and cheap," said Amy, "but so do the boarders. I doubt whether our efforts bring us in any munificent sum here."

"We might ask the proprietor to deduct something from our bill, because we are willing to entertain his guests," I suggested.

The proprietor proved to be a woman with large diamonds in her ears. She did not look as though she were in the habit of deducting anything, but

she said we might perform in the parlor after tea, as the boarders generally sat outside, and they could go in or stay out, just as they pleased. We pinned up a notice which we had prepared to the effect that "Miss Gray and Miss Vanderveer would give a musical and dramatic entertainment in the parlor at half-past eight," and, as we came out from supper, we could see the boarders reading it. When we climbed to our small room under the eaves to put on the other gowns, which we had brought in the box under the seat, we clutched each other in a sudden panic.

"I played two solos in the big ballroom at the Waldorf," said Amy defiantly.

"We have always plumed ourselves on being philosophical," I said, as we hooked and pinned each other with shaking hands. Our faces looked white and scared in the little flaky mirror, in which our reflections seemed cut on the bias.

"It's our own fault," said Amy. "Nobody asked us to make a show of ourselves. Come along." And we marched into the parlor with the violin and guitar, like martyrs on their way to the stake.

There were two old ladies already in the parlor when we began to tune our instruments, and some children came in and stared at us. Then the proprietress appeared with a thin woman in tow. We struck up a coon song, and several more people straggled in. All told, our audience numbered about fifteen women and ten children. They seemed very near to us and terribly lacking in enthusiasm, though, when I recited "Little Orphant Annie" the proprietress said it was "real cute." We were growing desperate at the chill of the atmosphere. "You'll *have* to give them the menagerie," Amy whispered to me.

The menagerie is my *pièce de résistance*, but it is neither a dignified nor a becoming performance; up to that time it had been reserved for my intimate friends. However, I agreed with Amy that something must be done to thaw this coldly critical atmosphere, so I

swallowed such little pride as by this time remained to me and roared and wriggled, gibbered and pranced, to the obvious delight of the juvenile portion of the audience. Seeing the rapture of their offspring, the mothers also unbent so far as to giggle, and for the first time we received a genuine round of applause, and I was obliged to encore my dreadful "turn," feeling thankful that no one I knew was present to see what an idiot I was making of myself.

"After that, *you* must pass around the hat," I said sternly to Amy, and she went about the room with a scarlet countenance and a pasteboard box, which was our contribution plate. The audience began to melt away as soon as it realized that a collection was being taken. Our box receipts, on that first evening, amounted to seventy-two cents, twenty-five of which were contributed by the proprietress.

"If it's all like this I shall have to write to Uncle John," said Amy gloomily.

"Do you wish you were back in Matapan?" I demanded severely. "I don't. I suppose George has been sitting on the doorstep all the evening. If I had realized that his sister's place was within easy bicycling distance of us, I should never have taken that house at all."

"And what do you think of *me*, without even a George to refuse every Sunday afternoon?" she demanded.

Our mattress was about the thickness and consistency of a buckwheat cake; the pillows were like caramels. There was a paper shade in our one window which we were obliged to pin up to let the air in, and a big June bug was bobbing about the low ceiling. I realized that Amy was crying. We forgot that we were philosophers. I felt for her hand in the dark, and we both felt for our handkerchiefs.

"You would have had a much better time this summer if you had only stayed at your Uncle John's," I said remorsefully. "I shouldn't have persuaded you to come with me."

"You didn't persuade me. I couldn't

stay at Uncle John's. I never told you, but there was a man—oh, dear!"

"What did he do?"

"It wasn't he—it was *they*. Just because he was disposed to like me a little—it wasn't more than that—they began to throw me at his head. You don't know what awful match-makers they are. And he couldn't help seeing it, so I just came away as fast as I could. That's all."

"Was he nice?" I asked.

"How *could* a man seem nice when you are being thrown at his head every hour in the day? Don't let's talk about it," said Amy. "His name was Willis," she said presently.

III

THE next day we drove to Gray's Falls, where we found a larger hotel and better business. A touring automobile passed us on the road with a single occupant in visored cap and goggles. "I hope he is going to the hotel," said I, with true commercial instinct. "He looks good for a dollar."

We could not tell whether he was in the parlor or not that evening, for those goggles disguise a man as effectually as the famous iron mask, but as I was going on my rounds—it had not been necessary to resort to the menagerie that evening, so it was my turn to take up the collection—a masculine hand was suddenly thrust in at the window from the piazza outside, and a five-dollar bill dropped into the hat.

I felt rather uncomfortable about that bill, but Amy said the man was probably a benevolent old thing with daughters at home, and that it was just like Uncle John, so I refrained from observing that, judging from his hand, he might be benevolent, but he certainly wasn't old.

We were off bright and early the next morning on our road to Scarboro, in much better spirits than on the previous day. So, alas, was Paul, whose skittishness was quite unaccountable. He took the bit in his teeth at the edge of the village, and ran for about a

mile; he ran again when we passed a blacksmith's shop; and just as we struck the best bit of road we had traveled so far, the "chug-chug" of an automobile sounded behind us and he decided to run again.

As I have observed before, we never worried about Paul's little habits, for he only ran for his own diversion, and whenever we came to any dangerous turning he always stopped of his own accord; but the man in the automobile didn't know this, and he was much concerned that his machine should have frightened our horse. "Keep to the right," he shouted, "and I'll stop him." And before we had time to assure him that we were in no danger, he had passed us on our left, sped ahead, stopped his machine and was standing in the road to catch Paul's head. It was a gallant rescue, so we refrained from telling him that it was unnecessary. He never took off his disfiguring goggles, hence we could not see his face, but his voice and figure seemed young. He said he would go ahead, in order not to alarm Paul again, if we would allow him a few minutes' start; so we scrubbed Paul down with bunches of fern while the automobile went chug-chugging out of sight.

There was a big hotel at Scarboro, and there we found a married couple whom we knew. The husband was scandalized at our enterprise, and threatened to telegraph to Uncle John, but the wife thought it the best joke in the world, and if there had been another seat in the go-cart, I think she would have insisted on taking to the road with us. We were an artistic and financial success at Scarboro. Our friend insisted on passing the hat for us, and among the proceeds we found another five-dollar bill.

"I think he's a theatrical manager and wants to engage us for vaudeville," said I.

Amy was unaccountably cross and asked me whether I had written to George.

During the next two days we caught glimpses of a motor-car in the distance,

but it did not come near us again until a severe thunderstorm overtook us on the road to Middleburg. We were struggling with our mackintoshes while the water ran down our necks and into our shoes, and, as ill-luck would have it, there was not a house or a barn in sight.

"That man has a top on his automobile," I said sadly, and just then I saw it coming toward us through the downpour. He stopped his car a little way off, under a better clump of trees than ours, and invited us to get in and sit under the shelter of his canopy until the shower passed over. He tied Paul to the fence, and covered the seat of the go-cart with a waterproof sheet he had in his car. Then he came back, and for an hour we sat and talked, but he never removed his goggles.

When the sun came out again, and he had helped us to dry Paul's harness and put the cart in order, he took a few minutes' start of us once more, and we went on our way. No sooner were we fairly off than Amy, who had been most talkative and agreeable during the shower, sank into a sudden and profound gloom. "I have discovered why he doesn't take off his mask," she announced finally.

"Has he no nose?" I asked breathlessly.

"He doesn't want me to recognize him," said Amy. "He thinks I don't know him, and wild horses couldn't drag the truth from me in his presence; but from the start I have suspected it, and now I know. It is Mr. Willis."

"The man at Uncle John's?" I gasped. "Then why doesn't he own it?"

"Oh, he's really too kind-hearted to leave two unprotected females in distress, but I know he thinks that if he were to take off that mask and say, 'How do you do, Miss Gray?' I should immediately be thrown at his head again."

"Who is going to throw you? Not I," I said scornfully.

"He probably thinks me quite capable of doing it myself. If you had only seen Uncle John and Aunt Fanny! Don't dare to tell him that we know

who he is if we ever see him again, which I sincerely hope we won't."

But we did. It was the last day of our eventful trip, and although we had heard the automobile, we had seen it only in the far distance, taking the same route as ours. He must often have stayed at the same hotel, but we never saw him out of his car, though the mysterious five-dollar bill made its appearance in the collection every evening. We had a little roll of them, which we would not touch, and we lived economically on our other earnings. We could not send them back to him, but Amy suggested giving them to a charity.

Now we were only eighteen miles from Pensico, and I had telegraphed my married sister to expect us that evening. We set out at nine o'clock, feeling much pleased with ourselves, and already composing a triumphant epistle announcing the success of our trip to Uncle John, when, just as we were arranging ourselves in the go-cart in front of the hotel, a telegram was handed to Amy. She tore it open.

"What on earth does this mean?" she demanded. "It's from Uncle John, and he says, 'If in any difficulty draw on Willis to necessary amount.' Laura, I see it all! Those bills were from Uncle John. He sent that wretched man to look us up, and he has been following us and reporting to him. It's a regular plot, and I'll never forgive them—never!"

"No wonder he wanted to hide his face!" said I. "Thank heaven we are nearly at Pensico, so he can't get us out of any more scrapes."

We were so indignant at the perfidy of Mr. Willis that we forgot to make our usual inquiries about the road, so we took a wrong turning, which lost a good deal of time, and when we were finally set on the right track the old man who directed us warned us to save Paul as much as possible.

"Shutesbury Hill will take the dander out of any hoss," he said. "It's nine mile long, sandy road, and jest five trees on the hull hill."

We thanked him for his caution and proceeded on our way, and in half an hour or so Paul picked up a stone.

We worked over his foot in vain. We could not dislodge the stone, there was no house in sight, and the pitiless midday sun was beating down on the first barren slope of formidable, treeless Shutesbury Hill. We pushed on at a snail's pace, hoping to meet a boy with a jackknife, or any means of relieving poor Paul, who was going lamer at every step; but we saw no one. We could go neither back nor forward; we had no shade and no water; the flies drove Paul frantic when he stood still, and when he went he limped so that we were ready to cry. And suddenly we heard "chug-chug," and on the slope of the hill coming toward us was the automobile.

"The wretch! He patrols the road where he knows we must pass!" said Amy. "I shall tell him what we think of him."

"Let him get the stone out of Paul's foot first," I cautioned.

"I'm afraid you are in trouble," he said, as he came up to us.

"You might add 'as usual,' Mr. Willis," said Amy, in a tone which evidently struck dismay to his heart. He tore off his goggles and mask, and confronted us with a red and rueful countenance. Never have I seen a man more hopelessly embarrassed.

"Mr. Gray thought—" he began, but Amy cut him short.

"It makes no difference *what* Uncle John thought. Uncle John and I never by any possible chance hold the same opinion about anything or anybody—and why he should select *you* to follow us and report our doings to him, I am at a loss to understand."

I was beginning to feel a little sorry for Uncle John's luckless emissary, especially when Amy went off and sat on the stone wall in the blazing sun instead of availing herself of the shelter of the automobile, while he worked over Paul's foot.

Of course he got the stone out—he always managed to do anything that

he attempted—and then he began unhitching Paul.

"What on earth are you doing?" I demanded.

"Your horse isn't fit to drag a carriage over this hill. He'll be laid up for six months if you attempt it. The only thing to do is to hitch the run-about to my machine, and let one of you sit in it and lead him. Where's your halter? I'll run slowly so that he needn't go much above a walk."

At first Amy flatly refused her consent to this plan, but I finally bundled her into the go-cart, which Mr. Willis had fastened to the automobile, and thrust Paul's halter into her unwilling hand, for I knew that there was nothing else for us to do. I sat on the back seat of the automobile, a buffer between the chief combatants, and as we went along I told Mr. Willis what we thought of him.

"How did Mr. Gray know what we were going to do?" I demanded.

"Well, I was going to take this trip anyhow, and I asked him for Miss Gray's address because I wanted to see her. So I went to your house and you were not there, but a man I knew was sitting on your steps, and he told me what you were going to do."

"George!" I mentally ejaculated.

"So I had occasion to telephone Mr. Gray that night, *on business*, and when he asked me if I had found you at home I told him what you intended to do. I'm very sorry I mentioned it, I assure you. Then Mr. Gray said he wished I would keep an eye on you and see that you didn't come to grief. He said," Mr. Willis continued severely, "that neither of you had any sense about money, and that I was to see that you didn't get stranded somewhere for lack of funds."

"We have not spent one of those ridiculous five-dollar bills," I said, with crushing scorn, "and we must beg you to take them back to Mr. Gray and tell him that we had no use for them."

"I told him Miss Gray wouldn't like it," he said dismally. "I knew she would think me an awful ass."

But I thought perhaps I could look out for you without your knowing it, don't you see? For it *was* a risky thing for two girls to do, now wasn't it?"

"Is that why you always kept on those dreadful goggles?" I asked.

"I thought she would rather accept any trifling service from a stranger than from a man she had known—and snubbed!" he burst forth.

"Did she snub you?" I asked innocently.

"Oh, rather! It was cheeky, my trying to look her up, but you see, Miss Vanderveer—well—oh, the fact is, I love her so!"

It was only by accusing Amy of jerking Paul's mouth that I finally induced her to change seats with me. I thought that man deserved a chance to explain himself, and he took it.

I sat in the go-cart, talking to Paul, but even at that distance I was conscious of a gradual change in the atmosphere. If Amy had not liked him uncommonly well she would never have considered it necessary to run away from him. We had been all-sufficient to each other so far, and we had planned to spend our remaining

days together in determined spinsterhood. But for this I might have regarded George as an epoch instead of an episode. Now a lonely vista of single blessedness without Amy spread before my prophetic gaze, for something told me that I was going to lose her. I wanted her to be happy, of course, but no other friend could ever take her place in my heart. By this time the two in the automobile had forgotten my very existence. I felt homesick and deserted, as I resolutely turned my face to the rear and talked to Paul.

A little cloud of dust was rising far in our wake. We were now on the downward slope of the long hill, and the spires of peaceful Pensico were rising in the valley beneath us. There were goldenrod and purple asters by the roadside. I tried to remember that I was a philosopher, but all the while I was pitying myself most sincerely. The cloud of dust was rapidly resolving itself into a coasting bicyclist. He came alongside and flourished his cap, and my heart rose suddenly at sight of his radiant, sunburnt face. It was George!



THE MEADOW

STILL hang the moonlit branches,
And the wide meadow seems
A vale where vaguely hover
Faint dreams and ghosts of dreams,

That come each summer evening
With warm, soft hush again,
Bringing the old-time beauty
And the immortal pain.

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE.



MODERN DEFINITION

KNICKER—What is the rule of three?
BOCKER—A divorce.

MISS QUIGLEY, TOBACCONIST

By J. J. Bell

TWENTY years ago it was the only tobacco-shop in Glasgow's western suburb. Yet it did not altogether flaunt its independence before the eyes of the local smokers. Those who were early abroad found the shutters down by 8 A.M.; those who were late could have their pouches or cases filled at midnight, although two hours earlier the gas jets in the window were lowered to tiny peeps.

But perhaps the window looked most attractive in a dim light, for its contents were generally shabby and stale. The meerschaums were yellowed, their plush and silken cases faded; the briars wore tarnished silver bands; the clays of numerous shapes and sizes were dusty; the packets of tobaccos and cigarettes were bleached by many suns; the loose tobaccos appeared dry and brittle, the cigar boxes—mostly "dummies"—suggested seediness rather than luxury; while the "fancy goods," such as pouches, cases, holders, walking-sticks and match-boxes, seemed to have abandoned all hope of ever getting sold. In those days, of course, tobacconists' windows at their best and most brilliant made but dull displays, for as yet they had not reached the period of dainty tins and labels, lovely or gaudy show-cards, highly-finished photographs of more or less prominent men and more or less obscure maidens, and frantic offers of cash and other rewards for smoking So-and-so's specialty. But Miss Quigley's window was duller than most of the tobacconists' windows of its time, and had it not been for a little band of regular customers

Miss Quigley's trade must have been even duller than her window. Happily, gentlemen were more regular in their habits, bad and good, two decades ago than they are today. Advertisements caught their eyes without capturing their souls. One could buy without having previously been bought; one could sell without having first sold oneself.

How Miss Adelaide Quigley—she was modest A. Quigley on her sign-board—came to be a tobacconist had been explained by several of her older customers in several ways; but the real reason was known only to herself, and she was a woman who could keep a secret. After all, most women can keep secrets—about themselves. In all her ways Miss Quigley was a lady—not merely "quite a lady" or "an exceedingly ladylike person," as the middle-class dame is so fond of expressing it. She wore her dignity as she wore her old garments and still older bonnet—as if she were used to it, not as if she had got it from a father or a husband a few years previously. The troublesome youngster who invaded her shop for "change o' a thrupp'ny bit" received the same courteous attention as did the old smoker who, going off on his summer holiday, entered with an order which meant much to the tobacconist. The workman wanting a "farden clay" was as cheerfully welcomed as the gentleman desirous of inspecting some cigars at "er—about a bob apiece." Miss Quigley was a respecter of all persons, because she had so far respected herself. She had sought always to be genteel, but at the

age of thirty-eight had, fortunately, only succeeded in being gentle.

Every morning a little before eight she opened her shop, and Mr. Fergus, who went early into town, never failed to call and purchase a threepenny Manila cheroot, one half of which he consumed while proceeding to his office, the other half while returning home. Mr. Fergus maintained that a threepenny Manila cheroot was economical and respectable, whereas a fourpenny Havana cigar was extravagant, if not positively dissipated. Between fifteen and twenty minutes past eight every second morning old Mr. Pagan had his snuff-box charged with "Genuine Kendal Brown," and invariably annexed a large extra pinch from the jar—for luck, as he put it; after which he fled snorting to catch the 8.25 car, and as often as not missed it. Immediately after his departure appeared Mr. Slimming, a bashful youth of some forty summers, who smoked imported American cigarettes at sixpence the packet of ten, and concealed the fact from his stern parents by consuming tiny but extremely aromatic silver-coated pellets from a small round brazen box bearing an embossed likeness of the late Prince Consort. Thereafter the greengrocer from next door dropped in to borrow a match, and the policeman popped in to remark on the weather. Otherwise Miss Quigley had few customers upon whom she could depend until the evening, when most of her business was transacted. Chance customers were rare, and someone whose supply of wit was only equaled by that of heart once declared his conviction that Miss Quigley spent the greater part of the day in wondering whether she should redress her window or her head.

It has been already suggested that Miss Quigley wore an old bonnet, and now it may be added that never, since she opened the shop for the first time nine years before, had she been seen in any other bonnet. During that period the bonnet may have undergone minor structural alterations, but at the time to which I now refer it was a rusty

wreck from whence now and then a black bead would drop, as if unable to hang on any longer. Still, there were left beads sufficient to make a faint sound when she bowed over the counter to greet or to speed a customer. The bonnet was on her head when she took down the shutters; it was still there when she put them up; and report had it that she slept in it.

Wrinkled out of proportion to its years was Miss Quigley's countenance, and yellow was her complexion, as though she were given to taking little fresh air and much strong tea—which was indeed the case. Her eyes were dull but kindly, her mouth melancholy yet not unwilling to smile, her nose ineffective and her hair thin and streaked with gray. Over her narrow shoulders, in cold weather, she hung a black, beaded dolman, once velveteen, and encased her worn hands in beaded mittens. On the third finger of her left hand she wore a ring set with sad-looking little garnets, while her other jewelry comprised old-fashioned, clumsy earrings with swinging pendants. Sombre, weary and not a little foolish she appeared to the casual customer, but to the regular one she was a person not altogether lacking in humor.

The shop itself was less dingy than the window. The glass cases and jars were free from dust; the brass scales were brightly polished. When you pressed the latch and pushed open the door there was a smart *ting* overhead and you entered the pleasant cedar and tobacco-scented atmosphere at the same moment that Miss Quigley, who never kept anyone waiting, came from the glazed and curtained narrow door of her living-room.

On your right was the counter, the bare part on Miss Quigley's side hacked and scored, the outer edge scorched in countless places; and on your left, under sundry lithographed show-cards, was a shabby, horse-hair covered form, bounded at one end by a stand of antique walking-sticks and canes, and at the other end by a show-case labeled "Choice Cigars," and containing a heap of pieces of twine rich in knots, a molt-

ing feather brush and a few damaged pipes and mouthpieces.

If you were a regular customer and not in a hurry, you would seat yourself on the form and enter into conversation with Miss Quigley; and even if you were in a hurry you would be invited to sit down until your order was executed. Miss Quigley always referred with a sigh to "this poor place of mine," and not her bluntest regular customer would have risked offending her by refusing her offer of hospitality. Indeed, several of her regular customers kept soft little corners in their hearts for her, and even when not in want of her wares would drop in of an evening, with the idea of cheering up the "lonely creature" with a brief chat on the weather and local topics, although, to be sure, Miss Quigley was not much affected by the former nor deeply interested in the latter. The manufacturers' travelers were also kindly disposed toward her and reported her at headquarters to be a respectable, honest, if lazy woman, whose credit might be considered good for all she was likely to order. Somehow Miss Quigley, in spite of her neglected window, contrived to plant seeds of confidence in the minds of those who were acquainted with her, and gradually these seeds sprouted and grew up, so that in her day of need, as will shortly be discovered, they had become trusty staves for her to lean upon.

II

ONE morning, toward the end of the year 1881, the greengrocer from next door, having dropped in to borrow his daily match, presented Miss Quigley with a gaily illuminated calendar which he had received from the provision merchant across the way. It was his annual return for the matches.

"Time flies," observed the greengrocer, selecting a couple of matches whose heads had stuck together. "As Dr. Lampson said to me yesterday—speakin' in a furrin' tongue, as if he was gi'ein' an order to the

druggist—he says, says he, '*Tempers fewgy!*'"

Miss Quigley smiled sadly. "I suppose time does fly—for some people. Thank you for this beautiful calendar."

"Ye're welcome, ye're welcome! . . . Eh, did ye notice if I took the len' o' a match, ma'am?"

"I did not, Mr. McHardy. But help yourself."

"Thank ye kindly. Mornin'!" And the greengrocer departed.

Miss Quigley spread the calendar for 1882 on the counter, and with pen and ink drew a heavy circle round the "13" in the square devoted to the days of April. Then she bore it into the back room and hung it on a nail in the wall at the side of the fireplace, after removing from the same spot the calendar for the year nearly ended.

"Ah, dearie me!" she sighed, "it has been a long wait, and a sad wait, and a lonesome wait, but the end isn't so far off now. It makes my heart sick to think of the years I've waited here. Nearly ten years! But it was the only thing to do, and I haven't altogether wasted the time. I haven't quite failed—and yet I haven't done nearly well enough—not nearly well enough! I've dreamed too much and neglected things. I should have cleaned my window and left poetry alone. But I thought—I hoped—"

She sat down on a rickety wicker chair and let her eyes rest on the faded photograph which hung directly below the calendar. It was the likeness of a man, a little over thirty, with a weak, well-featured face above a pair of handsome shoulders.

Presently she rose and went to a wall-press on the other side of the fireplace, took a thin black booklet from it and returned to her seat.

"It's silly of me," she said to herself, as she opened the booklet—her bank-book. "I can't make it more by looking at it. . . . And it isn't enough—not nearly enough. And how—oh, dear God! how am I to make it enough in less than four months? How?" Miss Quigley wept silently for the next few minutes. Then she

got up, put the book back in the press, sniffed and wiped her eyes.

"I must have a cup of tea," she murmured.

III

"CERTAINLY, madam!" said the sympathetic traveler of the firm with whom Miss Quigley did most of her business. "We'll let the account stand over till my next call—toward the end of April. I'm sorry you found the holiday trade so poor."

He was tempted, as usual, to offer a hint on the benefit of an attractive window, but refrained as he had done hitherto.

"It was very disappointing, sir, and I hate to ask such a favor as you have so kindly granted," Miss Quigley replied, bowing her head to hide her shame and emotion, while a couple of beads trickled from her ancient bonnet and pattered on the counter.

"Don't worry yourself about that," the traveler gently returned. "Have you an order for me today?"

Miss Quigley recovered herself and slowly recited the list of the goods she required. "I should not be giving you such a large order when I cannot pay your account," she said humbly, "but I'm going to try a little cheap sale of my old stock, and—and that should put me right for—for next month."

This was the third week of March, and a few days later the little cheap sale—"for a fortnight only"—was started.

But, apparently, it was not a success, for on an evening early in April Miss Quigley was discovered in tears by Mr. Fergus, who had dropped in for an extra cheroot and a chat.

"Business has been so bad," sighed Miss Quigley, when pressed to explain her trouble. "I'm sure I don't know what I shall do. Everyone wants their money, and the rent is due next month."

"Bless my soul, that's bad!" said Mr. Fergus, at the conclusion of a tale of sordid trial. "I had no idea you were so worried."

"Oh, but why should I bother you, sir, with my troubles? I feel your

kindness in inquiring very sincerely, but——"

"Don't mention it, don't mention it! H'm! h'm! I'll have to turn over a new leaf and smoke more, and get my friends who come in here to do the same," said Mr. Fergus, with an attempt at jocularity.

She smiled faintly, hesitated, and broke down again.

"It's hard for a woman to be sold up for want of a few pounds, sir, but I suppose it's the way of the world," she said tremulously.

"It's a damn bad way!" cried Mr. Fergus, indignant. "I'll be in tomorrow," he added, and abruptly quitted the shop.

Next day he insisted on her acceptance of a loan of twenty pounds to remove her load of anxiety regarding the half-year's rent, and at last she took the money on his consenting to remove, by way of security, several cases of cigars, including her stock of his favorite Manilas, along with sundry expensive meerschaum pipes. Mr. Fergus further benefited her by speaking quietly to a number of his friends who, although they could not or would not lend money, did the next best thing in relieving her of a large portion of her stock for cash.

"Oh, yes, I'm sure I'll manage now," she replied to the kindly inquiries of these customers, who noticed a new light in her eyes and a general briskness in her manner and methods, and said to one another: "It's worth while doing something to help a decent woman like her."

On the forenoon of the thirteenth of April Miss Quigley received a telegram:

Free at last! Waiting for you. Expect tomorrow night.

WILLIAM.

"Free at last!" she sobbed to herself in the privacy of her wretched little back room. "Free at last, after all these years! . . . Oh, William, William, I hope you'll be pleased with what I have done for you! I wish it had been more! And yet—and yet—Oh, God, forgive me!"

IV

WHEN the greengrocer would have dropped in for his match the following morning he found the tobacconist's door closed and pinned to it an envelope bearing the words, "Shut for today."

About seven o'clock in the evening of the same day Miss Quigley was gazing anxiously and fearfully from the window of a third-class compartment as the London train slowed into Euston. Suddenly she beheld him standing on the platform staring at the carriages in front.

"William! William!" she cried, in a queer, breaking voice. "William!"

He looked straight at her and turned away.

"Take time, ma'am, take time," said a porter, preventing her from jumping out ere the train came to rest.

"Now, ma'am. Any luggage?"

But Miss Quigley, forgetful of her modest possessions in the rack and under the seat, stumbled from the compartment, recovered balance, ran along the platform and halted, gasping, in front of the man, who was still staring about him.

"William!" she sobbed; "William, dear!"

The magnificently strong man almost leaped at her voice.

"William, don't you know me?"

"Good God! . . . Is it you, Adelaide? . . . I—I—I didn't know—didn't know you at first," he stammered, his face losing color, his brow growing moist.

She gazed at him through her tears, speechless.

"Your luggage—where's your luggage?" he asked abruptly, tearing his eyes from the hideous fascination of her miserable dolman and ancient bonnet. "Your luggage," he repeated, touching her arm and drawing his hand away quickly at the fleshless feel.

She roused herself as from a dream, and, after some search, showed him her few belongings. He tried to talk meanwhile, but his brain was half stunned, his tongue seemed tied.

"I can't marry her. She can't expect it of me now," was all he could think, while every now and then he felt her anxious eyes on his face.

And she, who had expected to find a jail-worn, sad-faced, weary man, whose nigh broken heart it would be her joy to salve and heal, found her lover of ten years ago—found him grown stronger, handsomer than she could have dreamed.

He took charge of her shabby bag and brown-paper parcels and led the way to a cab.

"You would prefer a boarding-house to a hotel?" he said mechanically.

Receiving no answer, he glanced down at her and saw that her face was white and her expression terror-stricken.

"What is it, Adelaide?" he asked gently, pricked by shame and pity.

Trembling, she pointed to one of the railway police standing near.

He laughed quietly. "Don't be alarmed. I've paid my debt. . . . But you're looking faint. Better come to the refreshment-room. Come, this way."

He conducted her, tenderly enough, to the nearest bar, and was about to order spirits when she begged for a cup of tea. Having procured it, he set it before her at a small table in a retired corner and seated himself beside her.

There was a long silence.

At last he said gently: "I'm afraid the long journey has been too much for you, Adelaide."

Her tears dropped into the cup she was drinking from, her fingers shook, and she had to set it down.

"It has been so long—so terribly long!" she murmured. "It seems to have taken all the strength out of me. . . . Oh, William, I don't mean the journey—I mean the time in Glasgow. I have had no friends since I went there."

"And you went there for me!" he whispered, checking a groan. "You gave up everything for me—me, the convict—your friends, your ambition for writing, your home and its comforts—everything! You hid yourself

and kept a wretched shop, starved yourself—I can see it—and suffered in order to—to give me a fresh start. Oh, Adelaide, Adelaide!" Shame and pity tortured him.

"To give you a fresh start, William," she said softly, drying her eyes. "I—I've something to tell you, dear—something dreadful. But I did it all for the best—for *you*. Yes; it will give you a fresh start—three hundred and twenty pounds nearly—won't it?"

"Did you manage to save that sum?" he asked, seeing that she was waiting for him to speak. "I—I wish to heaven you had not done it; I wish you had not suffered doing it. . . . Mr. Hamilton—you remember him?—he always had faith in me—Mr. Hamilton is going to take me into his business, to travel abroad for him, on a very good salary. So, of course, I couldn't touch a penny of your money now. . . . But it was wonderful of you! . . . Why, what's the matter?"

She was staring at him with wild eyes. In a few seconds she had learned the utter bitterness of her fate. He did not require her help. He was going abroad. His pity was hers, but his love had gone out. She *knew* it was so.

She turned from gazing at him, and for an instant caught sight of herself in a mirror.

"What's the matter, Adelaide?" he asked again kindly.

At last she spoke, and her voice was quite calm, though a little hoarse.

"I didn't save it all. I thought I hadn't saved enough, and so——"

And then she told him everything without sparing herself, told him the tale even unto its ugly end without emotion.

His elbows on the table, his hands clasped over his eyes, he sat listening to her. When she finished speaking he moved slightly and returned to his former position. Several minutes passed ere he took his hands from his eyes; his face was pale and drawn.

"You must go back at once, Adelaide," he whispered huskily, shakily.

"Go back? It's too late!"

"Hush! it is not too late. You will be there by the morning in time to open the—the shop, as usual. You must go back for your own sake! To think that you should have done this for *my* sake—dear!"

"I would have paid them all back afterward," she muttered vaguely.

"Yes, yes! But if you go back now it will just be like a bad dream. I should never have asked you to come to me. I should have gone to you. But it was what we arranged so long ago."

"So long ago!" she echoed stupidly. "So long ago, so long——"

The man, aching with shame and pity, took her to a restaurant where he persuaded her to drink some strong soup and a glass of wine, after which she recovered her nerves somewhat, although she made no further attempt to talk, merely listening to his sympathy and his directions, and occasionally nodding her acquiescence.

"And so," he concluded, "you'll be there in the morning, and nobody need be any the wiser, unless—unless you care to tell anybody that a very unworthy fellow is coming to marry you within a month from now. Do you understand, dear?"

"Very well, William," she replied listlessly.

He saw her on board the North train, doing what he could to make her comfortable; and at the last, to the amusement of several passengers, he bent his head and kissed her limp fingers in their woefully shabby black cotton glove. She, however, did not seem to observe the action, and a passenger whispered to a friend:

"Perhaps his aunt has money, though she looks like a pauper."

So it was that twelve hours later Miss Quigley, wan and weary, turned the key in the door of her shop as the policeman, who had just come on his beat, strolled up, saying:

"Fine mornin', ma'am! Ye've got home again."

"Home?" wondered Miss Quigley. "Home? . . . Well, if this isn't home,

where is home?" And shutting the shop again from the inside she tottered into the back room, dropped her belongings on the floor among the littered rubbish of her flight and fell on her knees by the rickety wicker chair, and cried the harsh bitterness out of her heart, leaving only the tender sorrow.

Later she rose, made and lighted the fire, and, having washed her lined face and worn hands, brewed a cup of good strong tea.

"Maybe it's home, after all," she murmured.

Later still she set her room in order, and proceeded with unpacking her luggage until she came upon his photograph, when she had to halt for another cry.

And then she opened her shop "to the public," and somehow it looked very dingy and dusty; wherefore she set about brushing and dusting and polishing until she was ready to drop with fatigue.

"I'll do the window tomorrow, and every week after," she told herself, as she rested in the afternoon.

And she did.

V

Not many evenings later Mr. Fergus left the shop with his twenty pounds in

his pocket, and, meeting an old friend on the street, said:

"Look here, my boy, if you're going in to see Miss Quigley, mind your eyesight!"

"Why? Has she knocked over a jar of snuff?"

"No; but she's got on new clothes and a new and *gorgeous* bonnet!"

"High time!"

"Yes, it *is* high time she had a chance. She has had a little money left her, it appears, and trade is improving daily. But, go in, if only to see the bonnet. It's *great!*"

And she did not marry William, although he journeyed North and begged her to do so. She knew the difference between a sore conscience and a sore heart, for she had suffered from both, and she knew that William came to her with the former.

"No," she said to him very gently. "You are going abroad, and I am going to stay at—at home."

"What? Here? You don't call *this* home, Adelaide?" he exclaimed, glancing round the little room, now cozy enough and by no means shabbily furnished.

"Yes, I do, William," she replied. "Now, don't say any more about it, and I'll make you a cup of tea before you go. Have another cigar."



HIS SOCIAL STATUS

"HE is in society, isn't he?"

"Yes, but only as a sort of vermiform appendix."



HOW SHE CAME TO MISS

SALLY GAY—She threw herself at his head repeatedly, but—
DOLLY SWIFT—Oh, well—Cholly has no head.

THE CRADLE-CHILD

FORGOTTEN, in a chamber lone,
 The hooded Cradle, brown and old,
 Began to rock, began to moan,
 "Where are the babes I used to hold?"

"To men and women they are grown,
 And through the world their way must make."
 The Cradle rocked and made its moan,
 "My babes no single step could take!"

"A helmsman one, on wide seas blown,
 His sinewy hands the wheel employs."
 The Cradle rocked and made its moan,
 "My babes could scarcely grasp their toys."

"And one, with words of winning tone,
 God's shepherd, goes the lost to seek."
 The Cradle rocked and still made moan,
 "The babes I held no word could speak!"

"And one, with children of her own,
 Her life is toil and love and prayer!"
 The Cradle rocked and still made moan,
 "My babes of babes could take no care!"

"Now, all that once were mine are flown
 But one, that still with me shall bide—
 (The Cradle ceased to rock, to moan)—
 The sweetest one—the babe who died!"

EDITH M. THOMAS.



CHIDED

THE girls were in despair over papa.

"Alas!" they murmured, "we cannot get him to do anything that is affected by the best people. He will not play golf, as it gets on his nerves. He will not play tennis, as it is too violent. He doesn't care for automobiling, nor even horseback-riding. Dear mama, what is to become of us? Is there no way that we can get him to do anything?"

But mama tapped on the table indignantly with her fan.

"Have you no filial feelings?" she observed. "Can it be possible that I have brought you up with such an utter disregard for your poor, dear papa? Can you not permit him to live and die in obscurity while making enough to keep us going? Surely, my darlings, this is all we have a right to expect from a Providence already severely overtaxed."

“A WOMAN, A SPANIEL AND A WALNUT TREE”

By Virginia Woodward Cloud

“**H**EREAFTER I shall not despair of reaching the summit of Parnassus.”

The Honorable Dale Valliant paused breathlessly to peer through branches which interlaced before him at the end of a mountain road that apparently led nowhere in particular.

“The rocks on this mountain are something unmentionable, sir, and I only hope they'll have a care of the hortomobile down at the farmhouse below,” remarked his manservant, with a note of unqualified resignation as he toiled upward in the rear.

“My good Marcus, it is not every man who is permitted by the gods—even on Parnassus—to carry a piece of curly walnut on his shoulders. I believe that grapevines or young kids were the customary sacrifice, but they will doubtless make allowance for our verdant inexperience. Give me one of your legs—the walnut ones—and I'll lead you on to fortune and to fame.”

“Thank you, no, sir,” said Marcus grimly. He was attuned to the vagaries attendant upon his master's passion for collecting antiques of every character, but an hour earlier he had received a shock from the battery of the unexpected.

They had stored the automobile in the barn of the farmhouse below, where the Honorable Dale's enthusiasm over an old bedpost of curly walnut standing in the corner had brought about its own Nemesis. Marcus, who could detect the depth of a leaf of veneering with his eyes shut, who traveled to unpronounceable climes in

search of curios to satisfy his master's insatiate tastes—Marcus, who ranked as a prince among expert collectors, had been mistaken for a furniture mender. Only the exquisite *moiré* finish of the curly walnut had allayed an open expression of his wrath. Following a glance from the Honorable Dale, Marcus permitted himself to be led, lamb-like, to examine the lock of a painted pine press, and to put a leg upon a kitchen chair. But he departed with the curly walnut over his shoulder.

“The place is certain to be hereabouts,” ruminated the Honorable Dale, examining a pocket map. “‘Road to the left up Fort Mountain’—if we go up higher we'll be asphyxiated—‘Along north branch of river’—here it is below us!—‘Ruined bridge near the cliffs’—right! Marcus, there should be a lane somewhere between us and chaos. All old places begin or end in a lane. Then according to Nature we should come to a level; even a mountain cannot go on forever. Then the Coble place—‘Beard of the Prophet!’ he broke off, as a beam of light struck him in the eyes and he stepped aside.

A sudden opening in the trees, a grassy road beyond, and a shaft of sunset revealed that for which he sought. A hedge loomed black and inaccessible before them, and single pines thrust protectingly above it. Beyond, against the indistinct blue of the mountain, the tower of an old house struck sharply upon the sky, the sunset turning its panes to copper.

One of these beams had reached the road. A brush of dark woods leaned against the yellowing west at the turn of the grassy level, and a little stream under the cliffs nearby broke into laughter as it leaped down the rocks—Nature's youth mocking at its age.

II

"COULD anything be more beautiful! I love it. Oh, Nancy, say that you love it, too!"

Her white gown trailed across the grass, through the drifted red leaves of a gum-tree, and her face was alight with youth and enjoyment, while the sunset caught her hair in a fitting net. Her companion, a modern type of controlled spinsterhood, put her lorgnette up and surveyed the mountain.

"Very nice, Eve, very nice indeed; but a little—near and—er—large, isn't it?"

"Oh, Nancy, Nancy Valliant! What should a mountain be but large? Does nothing old appeal to you?" Her laughter was delightfully spontaneous.

"Mercy, no! You should really cultivate a taste for the modern, my dear Eve."

"I can't understand how you happened in our family, Cousin Nancy. We are so dreadfully old—the falling branches of an ancient tree." The young chatelaine's face dimpled as the other turned her glass upon its radiance.

"Your immediate danger of dissolution is not evident. Yes, I suppose a lover of ruins would pronounce the place beautiful, Eve dear, and I fancy you were wise not to sell it—yet, at any rate."

The other turned a shocked face.

"Nancy! Do you imagine that forty thousand mules laden with a million apiece could drag it from me? Why, I love every old gray rock and diamond pane, every stick and stone, every flowering bush and tree! And the dear river and the cliffs and the mountain and—"

"The rat-holes," interpolated Miss Valliant. "And don't forget the back porch, my dear; it is a man-trap—or would be if there were any men in this wood." She sighed, a modern echo of an ancient lament. "The finished masculine is apparently not indigenous to the mountain. It rather over-produces angular feminines in purple sunbonnets, doesn't it?"

"Old Nicholas is a mountaineer, and Ezra Brock down at the store is a very nice young man," said the chatelaine, with spirit, "and I'm glad there are no others. I do not think I like men very much."

They had reached the hedge now, through which sight could not penetrate but sound was quite audible, and the chatelaine stopped suddenly, her hand upon her companion's arm.

"Listen! Someone is coming! Isn't it like the hedge of the Sleeping Beauty? Only you must be the Princess, Nancy; I could never sleep enough!"

A masculine voice on the other side of the hedge sounded, drawing nearer.

"This must be the famed Coble place, but how does one gain entrance? I thought such a hedge as this belonged to fairy tales. Still, I suppose as only ghosts are said to inhabit the house they can gently waft themselves over the top."

"We'll get in some way, sir," said a second voice, "and if it's only a matter of a claw-foot or a curled leg we'll find it! Maybe she hasn't an arm." Marcus always alluded to his curios as feminine. "She'll be doubly vallyble without or with only one, sir."

She on the other side of the hedge gave a gasp of mingled horror and dismay.

"But if she's real clumsy and onmanageable, sir, I guess I can take 'em off, as I've done before!"

She on the other side of the hedge fled precipitately, dragging her companion by the hand, but the last remark reached her.

"It's only a goat, sir. A goat runs that way!"

III

WHEN the Honorable Dale had dropped the brass knocker for the third time and heard the sound strike only cavernous silence within he went to one of the great, low windows and drew himself up by the sill and peered in.

"If all were not fair in love of research this would be inexcusable!" he murmured. "Lo! I behold a claw-foot!"

Marcus propped his walnut leg in a corner of the porch and ran around to another window.

"Excuse me, Your Honor"—only in moments of stress did Marcus drop into oratorical terms—"the andirons in this empty house has heads as big as cannon-balls! If it's only a matter of a few ghosts, sir, I'd say we'd best go in and learn their language!"

"Apparently no one else lives here now." The Honorable Dale rapped on a pane and a voice above, unheard by him, whispered.

"Impudent!"

Two bright eyes peeped down between the shutters. Then she flew to tell Miss Valliant. "Nancy, he shall see everything the place holds! He shall be filled with envy and greed—then he can go! I'm sick of collectors, and have forbidden the servants to speak to him."

Presently the Honorable Dale passed around to the rear and stood in the kitchen door. A spacious old negress was standing before the enormous stove, and he greeted her courteously.

"Good evening, aunty. Is anyone living here at present? Can I see anyone?"

The old woman bowed and calmly went on frying chicken.

"Then, aunty, will you exercise your unusual eloquence by finding out if I may have a night's lodging here or board for the night? I really cannot go back to the foot of the mountain before dark; besides, the pangs of hunger assail me!"

The Honorable Dale could be as ingratiating as the next Anglo-Saxon

when he chose. His handsome eyes pleaded with the old woman, as he stood in the door, hat in hand.

"Aunty, look upon me. I am not accustomed to being hungry and—powers that be! Marcus, observe that India tureen!—that iron crane!—that— Oh, my good woman, can't I get my supper here? Hunger is a most uncomfortable sensation!"

A gleam lighted the old negress's eyes as she accurately took his stalwart measure and set him down as every inch a gentleman, in spite of his chaff. She led him around to the front of the house and a moment later the massive entrance doors opened and he was motioned into the dim, high-ceiled, ancient hall beyond. Then the doors closed and the Honorable Dale succumbed to the invitation of an easy-chair and ruminated. Marcus was surveying the interior with a trained eye. Presently he tiptoed over to his master and murmured:

"I think, sir, we'd better manage to stay a week. It's the biggest find yet!"

Meanwhile the chatelaine, with a flame of excitement, was giving low-toned directions in the dining-room.

"Put on the India set, Dilsy. Serve him with supper immediately. Light the Roman lamp—the one with chains. Light this brass one! Get out the fleur-de-lis cups—"

"Not de Queen's china, missy, fo' dis gemman!"

"Yes, yes! Everything, I tell you. And he is only a collector, Dilsy, not a gentleman!"

"Pears mighty lak it," said the old woman. "He's got a gemman's funny way wid him." The chatelaine's inner consciousness was reluctantly aware of the same sensation when she looked down between the shutters upon a glimpse of broad-shouldered masculinity in gray tweed, but she only replied severely.

"I am tired of being besieged by collectors, and shall find a way to rid us of them. I wish him to see everything."

Then she flew upstairs to Miss Val-

liant, who lay upon a wicker lounge in a window.

"Nancy, Nancy, do wake up! How can you sleep so much? I have the most delightful idea!" She pirouetted back and forth and dropped into a chair laughing.

Miss Valliant opened her eyes. "I sleep scientifically, my dear Eve—a rest cure to remake my complexion for all next winter. What's the fresh excitement in this intoxicating atmosphere? Did you awaken me to listen to a panegyric upon the furniture man?"

"Oh, Nancy, do listen! You know I hate men——"

"A pity. They are more facile than women."

"And the one downstairs is an impudent creature who peeped in the windows. Fancy! Now, he actually wants a night's lodging. He shall stay! I have ordered his supper——"

"Eve! A strange man? Are you crazy?"

"Oh, Nancy Valliant, you have never lived up on a mountain. We've had to do it scores of times. Are there not twenty rooms closed? At any rate, he is a horrid collector. None of them has any conscience. He shall stay here tonight and see everything—the India, the bronzes, the Florentine case, the *fleur-de-lis*——"

"But my dear Eve——"

"Wait! When he is fairly inflated with desire to buy them I shall put so enormous a price upon them that he will go off crestfallen. When I have refused all his offers——"

"A little premature, my dear. He may be a married man."

"Nancy, you are horrid! Then, I shall show him the door, with my price-list in his memory. He is the seventh collector in two months. I shall put a stop to them this way. Isn't it exciting?"

"Wildly," said Miss Valliant, closing her eyes. "I have heard that savages invent odd methods of amusement, and that to a grave-digger there is no dissipation so exhilarating as a funeral. I shall go to sleep again.

You may send me up anything for supper that is left from the clutches of the furniture man."

IV

"Of course you understand that I am boarding here for the night, or I could not accept this hospitality at the hands of those who are in care of the place."

The Honorable Dale politely accosted old Michael, who stood in silent attendance upon the table. The old man's gesture was indicative of the imperative command of someone else, and his reply was to pass the hot biscuit.

Not a word had the Honorable Dale been able to elicit from the two retainers. Now, conscience and hunger met in combat before chicken, coffee and sponge-cake, and conscience lay overthrown. The surroundings wove a charm only experienced by a lover of the antique and traditional in art. He was under the thrall of the Roman lamp, with its tiny taper and carved chains, and of the massive brass one with its shaded Bohemian globe—of a wonderful crystal clock, shaped like an ancient fob-watch bound in brass, and the light which radiated from silver candelabra reflected on mahogany that knew no veneer. The Honorable Dale leaned back and sighed as the old man disappeared in the direction of the kitchen.

"Incredible and supernatural," he said. "Marcus, did you know before that ghosts wear red bandannas and fry chicken with the hand of art? They are apparently served by deaf-mutes also. Well, there are occasions when circumstances are stronger than man, and this is one of them."

Later that night, when the Honorable Dale walked the terrace smoking under the stars, the same old servant brought a lighted candle to the door and motioned to the staircase, with a bow that savored of more than one generation's training, and the Honorable

able Dale followed—as the adaptive spirit will—followed the massive candlestick.

The room above, with its inevitable high white bed, only accentuated the impression he received below. The old man put the candlestick down and closed the door behind him. Then the blood of the collector ran high, and he held the light up to look around him, at the great chest of drawers reaching almost to the ceiling, at the ancient table, the swinging mirror, the corner clock, the spindle-legged chairs. Then he blew out the light and went to the window, looking out on the giant mountain with a sigh of genuine content. It was the sigh of one who finds himself among the *lares* and *penates* which his heart loves. The moonlight flooded the trees below and made more impressive the gloom of rocks beyond. Through the insistent noises of night plashed the murmur of peaceful waters.

"There is no one on the place except these two old servants," said the Honorable Dale. "If there were, I should assuredly ask permission—but as it is, what harm can I do?" He struck a match and lighted his candle.

All absorbing passions have the moment of crux, when Fate throws her glove into Life's arena and the soul is lost or won through leaping after it over the bar of convention. He took his candle up and closed the door behind him. The draught from the great halls fanned the taper as he went down the steps to the dining-room, but on its threshold he stood transfixed by another gleam of light which came from the floor and revealed a crouching figure. His hand flew to his hip pocket, but the figure suddenly stood upward and made the same gesture.

"Marcus! What are you doing here?" said the Honorable Dale severely. There is little need for silence when only ghosts can overhear.

"I couldn't sleep for it, sir, and that's a fact! It's a genuine Chippendale, sir, that chair leg. I'll swear to

it in a court of law! We must take it along, sir."

"Take it along! My good man, from whom are we to buy it? Take it! And how about the brass and crystal clock—and that Roman lamp. A Benvenuto Cellini, I'd say! And that wonderful china?"

"All of 'em, sir! I wouldn't stir a foot without 'em if the ghosts flayed me alive; though, if you'd as lief, Mr. Dale, I'll manage the ghosts and you have an eye on the old woman. A woman that don't talk none is more dangerous than one that talks all the time, sir."

His master held the candle aloft. "The date of that engraving, Marcus, was what I came to investigate. If I'm not very much mistaken—"

"You're not mistaken, sir. It's worth its weight in diamonds, sir. If you could get a look at its sculp—Would you be so good, sir, as to step up on my back, and just tell me?"

Marcus adjusted himself under the engraving with back ready for its burden and the Honorable Dale was proceeding to step upward when a voice said:

"I am sorry to interrupt your game, but you will find more room on the terrace for leapfrog!"

The Honorable Dale jumped backward, with a chill striking to his marrow, as he turned to face the loveliest woman it had ever been his privilege to behold. The vision held a boat-shaped, ancient lamp which sent a glow upward to her face, and he stood speechless, gazing at her—at one white arm raised from its long, falling sleeve, the proud young head and its nestling rings of bright hair, the white throat from which laces fell. A hand held her white *négligé* at the breast, and the Honorable Dale forgot to look at the boat-shaped lamp, which was of itself significant. Her voice was coldly, politely sarcastic. "Possibly you had better first explain why a guest is here out of his room at this hour?"

The Honorable Dale straightened himself.

"Marcus, you may go," he said.

"Marcus—whatever you are—you may stay!" uttered the vision with such peremptoriness that Marcus ejaculated, "Yes, madam!" and his master, "Why, of course, Marcus, stay!"

"And now perhaps you can explain yourself." She turned upon him with sudden flame. The Honorable Dale laughed a little. He could not help it.

"I'm afraid I can't," he said. "At least, it will sound quite as bad as though I were a burglar."

"I'm sure that is what you appear to be. Otherwise why are you investigating my house at this hour?"

Her house! His heart gave a queer thump and an undefined thrill followed it.

"To say that I ask your pardon is trite," he commenced. "I do not even know to whom I am indebted; I only know that it is the Coble place, but I thought it was empty."

"Evidently, when I discovered you." Her tone brought the blood to his face. His Anglo-Saxon directness was touched and spurred to retort:

"I confess to a foolish fondness for collecting antiques, merely as a pleasure, and—I asked the old woman if I might spend the night here. To tell the truth, there seemed no alternative. It—we came much farther than I had anticipated, for I've had a consuming desire to see this place, and latterly—to see the date of this engraving. That is all."

She shook her head slightly, as though weighing him in the balance. Had he seen beneath her lashes he would have discovered a gleam of childish, gleeful mischief, but outwardly she was preternaturally grave.

"You can scarcely expect me to accept so trite a reason in the face of what I overheard your—companion say about carrying the things off." She made a gesture which relegated Marcus to the dust of the earth. "I am quite accustomed to collectors, but I admit that your methods are new"—her hand now stole toward the bell-rope—"and I fear that you must suffer the consequences of your remarkable de-

sire to look at an engraving at midnight!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Dale, with such emphasis that she did not ring; "you thought I was going to steal! Me steal! Oh, come now, that is too good!"

He laughed out, a laugh so boyish and frank that a flush rose to her face.

"I assure you," he went on, "I am quite what I represent myself to be—Oh, say, I don't quite mean that, you know!"

"No, I'm afraid the representation is a little vague. And is not the word of one who so far transgresses the laws of hospitality a rather frail bond?"

This coup, delivered with exasperating coolness, was like a douche of cold water, for the vision was only growing more alluring with each new assumption of indignation, but at her last words the eternal masculine leaped to arms.

"I assure you that I am merely a collector, and to prove it any possession with which you may be ready to part will only become mine at your own price!" he said.

She put her candle on the table between them and rested a hand on either side of it as she looked around her. A dimple lurked longingly at her mouth's corner, but she was grave.

"So—you wish my price?"

"If you will," he said coldly, thinking how exquisitely the candlelight wove a halo around her hair and against the cedar panels of the old room, and heightened the fire of indomitable spirit that lay back of her *séduisante* face.

Marcus was standing first on one foot, then on the other, in this moment of thrilling excitement, but his master waited with arms folded.

"The brass lamp," she commenced, "is ten thousand dollars."

Marcus's jaw dropped.

"The crystal clock—of course you would want that? It has but one duplicate in the world. This one is twenty thousand dollars."

Marcus's candle fell to the floor and he dived after it.

"The Roman lamp, and the side-board—notice that, please—inlaid with brass; the Florentine case beside it—observe, please—worked in with bone. Do you observe the insignia of the Medicis? It is genuine." With cool lightness she ran over each article, including the engraving, and at each named a fabulous sum. Then she leaned across the table with serious lips but dancing eyes. "I think you understand. My treasures are priceless. Shall we call the matter closed?" The Honorable Dale was writing rapidly in a small book.

"Pardon me," he said, "I was forced to take the details rapidly, but I think I have them correctly." He tore a page out and met her eyes with imperturbable coolness. "I will make out your cheque now."

"What!" The color flew from her face, leaving it white and appealing, like that of a child who plays with danger and suddenly faces undreamed-of results. "What do you mean?"

"You named your price. I accept it," he said. A thin slip of paper drifted down between them on the shining surface of the table. "Your cheque!"

For a moment the old-time clock ticked loud in protestation. Then Miss Coble gave a gasp of horror.

"You mean—you think for a moment that I would sell my inheritance? Why, I should as easily think of selling myself!"

Their eyes met warringly now, hers full of horrified amazement, his masterful with revenge.

"I am sorry that your decision comes too late to alter the validity of the sale, but I assure you that my man is quite accustomed to moving valuable articles without injuring them."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, as though stifling, "oh—!" and sprang back as a second gleam appeared in the doorway and Miss Valliant's voice said:

"Eve, may I ask what you are doing here at this hour? And—why, Dale Valliant! What are you doing here?"

The Honorable Dale sprang for-

ward with an exclamation which savored of praise and thanksgiving.

"Cousin Nancy! I don't know what anyone is doing here! But will you kindly present me to this lady and assure her that I am not a burglar? Then I shall try to explain."

Miss Valliant put her glass up.

"Unless a few years have metamorphosed you, Dale, you can explain away a London fog. I supposed you were in remote climes collecting unnecessary refuse. You appear, as usual, to be officiating at a rather unique *séance*, are you not?"

"I am, I am!" The Honorable Dale spoke fervently. "I have just had the privilege of buying a few little things from this lady—"

"Buying!" Miss Valliant turned an amazed eye-glass upon the chatelaine. "Eve, it cannot be possible! My cousin, Mr. Valliant, Miss Coble."

The white figure beside her suddenly sprang to the table and seized the cheque. She tore it in two pieces, flung them down and with a whirl of white disappeared through the door. The Honorable Dale smiled a little to himself as he drew out his book and coolly wrote another.

"Will you kindly explain what this extraordinary performance means?" asked Miss Valliant resignedly.

He laughed after the manner of a boy who has discovered a treasure. "It means a cheque for one hundred and fifteen thousand dollars, which I shall ask you to hand Miss Coble in the morning."

V

"He has dared send this, and has come here again? What unwarrantable impertinence!" The chatelaine raised upon her elbow and pushed aside the white draperies of her bed, her ruffled hair and softly flushed face framing two indignant, questioning eyes.

Miss Valliant laughed a little.

"My dear, he went at once. I fully expected to hear that the remains of the two men were picked up at the bot-

tom of the cliff this morning, but it seems he had the discretion to sit on a boulder until dawn before seeking the path down the mountain. The Valliant men are prone to be masterful, Eve, and to get their own way in the end. Besides, you must admit you called him a burglar."

The chatelaine lay back, a picture of youth in a soft white frame. Her arms were thrown upward and she smiled.

"Men always think they can have their own way. Does he actually suppose I thought the cheque genuine? A young man who tramps all over the country collecting old furniture is not likely to draw up a cheque for a hundred thousand without demur. Still, I thought it decidedly rude of him to attempt chaff with a lady and a stranger." Suddenly she clapped her hands and laughed. "Oh, I have discovered a way by which to reduce him to ignominy and shame!"

Miss Valliant concealed a smile as she laid the despised cheque on the toilet table and said gravely: "He deserves to be bankrupt, my dear, and if he does not have carfare to get him back to Gotham when you are finished with him, it is his just deserts. Men can always take care of themselves, and they possess a hundred weapons for self-protection to a woman's one. The question now is: Will you see him this morning and give him the lesson in humility that he needs?"

Miss Coble sprang up, exclaiming: "I will indeed! Please ask him to wait, Nancy, and will you send Dilys for my bath?"

Miss Valliant's irreproachable linen swept down the stairs to the hall where the Honorable Dale stood waiting; for some reason he was too restless to be seated.

"Will she see me?" he said abruptly.

"My dear Dale," Miss Valliant's glass went up as she surveyed him, "you are unnecessarily upset about a mere business matter. Why shouldn't she see you? But be prepared for an obstinacy as strong as your own. She did not intend to sell the things, but

to prove that they were above any collector's price in value to her."

The Honorable Dale smiled and looked absently into vacancy.

"Oh, I'll arrange all that. I only wanted to be sure that she will see me this morning."

It was an hour later when, hearing a door close upstairs, Miss Valliant stepped out of a vine-hung door and left the Honorable Dale standing in the hall to face the Nemesis which awaited him. Possibly a night had worked the miracle of regeneration in him, for, as he watched the slim young figure in white coming down the steps, he was only conscious of an overwhelming sensation that he was indeed a miscreant for whom no punishment were too heavy. How sweetly youthful she was, how flowerlike her slim height, how fresh her soft beauty! Did sunlight ever strike palely across so pearly a throat, such nestling rings of hair, so delicate an ear?

Suddenly, before her cool, level glance his six-feet-two of masculinity dwindled to dwarf stature.

"Your cousin says that you wish to see me about the sale of my things. It is quite unnecessary," she was saying. His quick gesture of protest caused her to look up.

"I assure you, Miss Coble, that I had no intention of pressing the sale. I am ashamed to admit that I—that I—only wished to prove to you——"

She interrupted coldly:

"Did you not send me this cheque in payment? It is hardly possible that you wish to withdraw from a sale which you pronounced valid."

"I was an ass!" he exclaimed. "The truth is, you spurred me on to prove that I—am an honest man and not—" Her slightly arched brows stopped him.

"You regret the price, perhaps? It is unfortunate that your decision comes too late to alter the validity of the sale." She quoted him mercilessly.

"Jove, no! But I appear to be more of an ass every minute! Don't you understand, Miss Coble? I am not ac-

customed to prowling around people's houses this way—"

"Oh!" she murmured with maddening incredulity.

"I own the case looks awfully rough on me, and all that, but don't you think I've been punished enough already? Of course I knew you didn't want to sell your things. I shouldn't have dared propose such a thing if—if you hadn't called me a burglar. You didn't actually think I would press this sale?" he broke off with boyish impetuosity.

She held up a slip of pink paper.

"Your cheque," she said, and holding up a second one, "my receipt."

Now the Honorable Dale may have had more experience with beasts and birds of the jungle than with women, but he held a theory that primary principles of pursuit were safe ones and could be relied upon in emergency. He suddenly drew the cheque from her fingers, tore it in two pieces and stuffed them into his pocket. As he did so his eyes held her startled ones for a moment, and as hers were withdrawn a shy color flamed under her white skin. Involuntarily her head lifted proudly and her lashes swept downward.

"Do you suppose that I would buy from you?" he said, almost harshly, "or that you will ever sell to me? Why, before I leave the mountain you will give me, of your own will, your most precious possession!"

He turned and left her. A shadow fell between her and the vines outside and the heavy brass pendulum on the landing above ticked monotonously. Without were the softly insistent summer sounds, the air dense with the odor of roses. She was only conscious of these.

When Miss Valliant entered presently she stopped at sight of the white figure, standing with a hand to its cheek and looking ahead with eyes that apparently saw nothing.

"My dear Eve, are you in a trance?" she asked.

The color came back swiftly to the girl's face.

Sept. 1904

"Your cousin—oh, I wish he had never come here! I hate him—I—I never hated anyone before!"

"Hate Dale? Hate Dale Valliant!" Miss Valliant's glass went up speculatively. "Oh, I compliment you, my dear. As far as I know, you are the only woman on earth who has ever done so."

VI

"It must be the clock," she murmured, "yet I value the Florentine chest more. He seemed to like the clock, though. He surely must know that I would never give it away."

She sat in a shadowy copse roofed by leaves and heavy with flowering grape. She was ostensibly embroidering an improbable blossom upon an unnecessary piece of lingerie. "Nancy," she said aloud, "what do you consider my most precious possession?"

"Youth and beauty; hold on to it," said Miss Valliant promptly. She was absorbed in the society column of her daily paper.

"Oh!" The other grew suddenly pink and soliloquized, "He could not have meant—how absurd! He would not dare!" And aloud, "No, I mean the things in the house, Nancy dear."

"I do not know, Eve. A collector would give his eyes for any of them. Are you contemplating another sale? I must confess that you appear to be able to oversell any collector on record!"

"Nancy, how dare you! You know perfectly well it was only my plan to—punish Mr. Valliant for his audacity! I would not sell a brick from here."

"The only marvel is that Dale did not hold you to the bargain," ruminated Miss Valliant, scanning her columns. "He is so enormously rich that it would have been the same had you named a million as your price."

"What do you mean?" The chate-laine's wide-open eyes were upon the speaker. "I didn't know—I never dreamed he was rich. Oh, you never told me!"

"My dear Eve, can it be possible

that you do not know of Dale Valliant's colossal fortune? Why, his name is traditional."

The chatelaine's lovely head drooped. There were hidden tears of dismay and confusion under her lashes. "I don't know very much about people, Cousin Nancy."

"You don't have to, my dear," said the other, with a sudden tone of gentleness. "You need only look at them! Yes, Dale has inherited several fortunes and made others, as a natural sequence. When he is not in Bagdad or France or in a palace in Italy or a shooting-box in England or a ducking-place in America, he is probably to be found in Wall Street or—an African jungle. Dale is like the gentleman in 'The Arabian Nights' who had a magic carpet. One can never tell whence he comes or whither he goes. Matchmakers have failed so far to entrap him, but there was a Princess Voleffski, I believe—"

"Oh, I didn't know he was that sort of a person at all," interrupted the other.

"Quite that sort." Miss Valliant folded her paper as her keen eyes des cribed a figure in white flannels crossing the lawn behind the leaves. She took up her sunshade, adding, "I shall go to the house for a book. Do wait for me."

"Millions!" said the chatelaine to herself; "and I called him a burglar!" She sat lost in thought, watching a wren darting from thicket to thicket before her. "Yes, it must be the clock," she added irrelevantly.

She looked up to see the Honorable Dale standing beside her.

"Don't go, please, Miss Coble. I saw Cousin Nancy going to the house and came here to find you."

She leaned back helplessly. "Your assurance is past belief!" she said.

"Is it?" The Honorable balanced himself upon a precarious grapevine nearby. "Now I should call it candor. I'm rather a direct sort of person and I came all the way up the mountain to ask you something." Her

eyes looked interrogative for a second and he pursued his moment quickly. "Cousin Nancy says that you hate me. Now of course it is not surprising when one is disliked. Any man may run up against a little thing such as that. But it's so confounded odd to be hated, you know, that I—er—rather like it so far."

"Like it!" escaped her. She had a confused sensation that she was uncertain whether to go or stay, to be angry or disdainful.

"Yes, hatred is so much more pronounced and calls for action. Now in France one would call a man out, in Italy knife him, in Spain abduct him, in England ruin him politically. But a woman"—he put in his eye-glass contemplatively—"one really doesn't know exactly what to do about it, you see."

"You might return it," she suggested, recovering.

"Impossible! Would you be so good as to tell me the—er—cause of this distinct animosity?"

"Is it so extraordinary for a woman not to—to like you, Mr. Valliant?" she asked rather aimlessly.

"Heavens, no! It is perhaps the surest fate of a man who has knocked around as much as I have—a man without a home."

"According to Miss Valliant, you have more homes than most men."

"Oh, those are merely definite destinations," he said promptly. "You see, if one is in Timbuctoo or Arabia he can always run down to Ceylon to see what his native housekeeper has left him to call his own."

"But that is a shamefully wasteful way to live!" she exclaimed youthfully.

"Beastly! But a man must do something—" He was inwardly musing upon the beauty of the eyes and lips which had averred that they hated him.

"You might be doing so much good!" she said, suddenly unmindful of that hatred and speaking with a sweet earnestness. "You have the means to do so much for others. You might make them so happy—"

"Why, so I might." He dropped

his eye-glass and sprang up. "Tell me what to do and I'll go straight and do it!"

The chatelaine rose also as Miss Valliant's sunshade appeared through the leaves. "It is marvelous that a man with your experience should find no better way of employing his time than keeping up useless establishments all over the world," she said severely.

The Honorable Dale looked illuminated.

"Why, so it is! I'll telegraph one of my agents to sell out at once. Thank you so much!"

For answer the chatelaine suddenly stamped her slippered foot upon the soft turf and the light of inconsistency shone in her eyes.

"I wish you would not be so absurd! And if you wish to know why I—I dislike you, it is because I do—there!"

She went across the lawn with her head held very high, and when Miss Valliant entered the copse the Honorable Dale stood with his hat up watching her retreating figure.

"Well, Dale," said that lady, "are you posing as the Winged Mercury?"

"I am unpremeditatively posing as a fool," he said promptly, "and I'm going to be married."

"Is it sudden?" asked Miss Valliant.

"Most inspiration is," said the Honorable conclusively.

VII

"It is very unlike Dale Valliant to waste time on an inaccessible mountain," remarked Miss Valliant a few days later. The speech was apparently irrelevant, although the smoke of an automobile had not cleared from the road beyond the hedge, where it had puffed a moment before. The chatelaine stood beside a pillar twining a rose. Now she paused, as Miss Valliant added, "He is the busiest man of leisure in the world, I fancy; and he does so much good all the time."

"Does good? He? In what way, if you please?" The chatelaine's tone held the tolerant inflection which

usually accompanied the mention of the Honorable's name. "I cannot imagine how a man who wastes his time running around the world for his own amusement, spending money on himself, can do much good for others."

Miss Valliant smiled innocently.

"My dear Eve, how did you receive so perverted a view of Dale? He does almost nothing else. He is a philanthropist as well as a beauty lover. His money has educated more than one struggling young artist who owes to Dale his future success. If he is not engrossed in his home for cripples he is endowing some other of his hobby-like charities. I assure you Dale's charities are the despair of his relations, who think that he squanders most of his fortune upon paupers."

The chatelaine interrupted breathlessly. "Oh, please call him—stop him, Cousin Nancy! I have made a mistake; there is something I must tell him at once."

Miss Valliant's glass went up.

"I thought you didn't like Dale. Really, Eve, you are becoming very changeable. There is his man, however."

It was an excited and breathless Marcus who was hobbling across the lawn. "You see, ladies," he was saying when in earshot, "there ain't no horse I can't stop, but a hortomobile is a cross 'tween a mule and a steam boiler. There ain't no breed like it for contrariness! It stopped out yonder and puffed and panted, then blowed off its rage and jumped and throwed His Honor ten feet into the air."

"Is he killed?—hurt?" cried Miss Valliant. But the chatelaine sprang past her and flew across the lawn to the hedge wicket. Outside, the Honorable Dale sat propped against a tree looking very white. He tried to rise as she ran toward him, but sank back. Then he smiled forcedly. "Most good of you, Miss Coble! But I'll be able to get along presently with Marcus's help. Beastly awkward of me to get such a throw!"

"We thought you were killed."

She found herself trembling, as she bent over him. "You must be carried up to the house."

"I'm afraid it is a little matter of a bone in the foot, or an uncommon sprain, but Marcus can mend that." He made a second effort which turned him white and the chatelaine lost no time in words.

When the Honorable Dale opened his eyes again he was being borne to the house between Marcus and Michael. They fixed him on a settle in the hall, and the chatelaine raised his head and put something to his lips. His eyes opened full upon the dark ones above them, and his head slipped comfortably back on a pillow. When she returned presently with bandages and lint he had revived sufficiently to assure her that Marcus was a better doctor of emergency than any in the profession, and must be sent down to the farmhouse for a wagon in which to convey him back.

She stood watching, however, while Marcus bandaged, and there was the warring of a lovely, if irresolute pink and white in her face. Suddenly she came nearer and spoke:

"I wish that you would stay here. We both do, don't we, Nancy? It would be much better for you. I hope that you will," she added impulsively. There must have been humor in the eyes which looked up at her, for her own fell.

"If you wish it, I will," he said. "Marcus must go down the mountain and send off several telegrams for me, however. Cousin Nancy, will you get me some blanks?"

When Miss Valliant went after the blanks he raised on his elbow. "I have some in my pocket, but I wished to speak with you. It cannot be agreeable to you, Miss Coble, to have me here, and Marcus had better return with a trap of some sort."

Step by step she had drawn nearer; now she leaned over him with the eternal motherhood of the feminine in her eyes.

"Please don't!—I've been horrid, I know! And—I am so sorry."

He put his hands out timidly. "I never knew a person less horrid. On my life! Will you?" Her hand lay in his for an instant, and something welled into his eyes, so strong yet gentle that her own drew away.

"I am glad that you will stay," she said.

The Honorable Dale leaned back smiling. The face which had leaned over him for that sweet second was so lovely.

"Here are some blanks, Dale," said Miss Valliant, entering. "Shall I send one to your fiancée?"

"My fiancée!" He laughed softly, and the chatelaine, after one startled glance, left the room.

"Yes; you told me that you are to be married," said Miss Valliant. "What is her name?"

"Her name," soliloquized the Honorable contentedly. "Jove! I've never called her by it, you know!"

VIII

It was dusk on the piazza, and one star hung jewel-like over the mountain. The Honorable Dale meditated

"Your pardon, Mr. Dale," broke in Marcus, arriving with the mail, "but there's a whole tree of curly walnut on the other side of the mountain, going for three hundred dollars!"

"Let it go," said the Honorable. "There is nothing on the other side of the mountain, Marcus, to be compared with the treasures on this."

"Werry good, sir, but will she sell 'em?"

"She? Whom?"

"Miss Coble, sir. I own they are treasures, sir, but will she sell 'em?"

His master's lame foot came down to the porch and he sat upright. "Miss Coble part with her furniture? Are you crazy? Do not let me hear such a suggestion again!"

"Your pardon, sir. I thought you said yourself—"

"I have a right to be a fool when I choose," said the Honorable.

"Certainly, sir!" said the old man, hobbling off.

The Honorable closed his eyes and mused again.

"Eve! Could any name be so appropriate?"

"A man never appears so idiotic as when he sits and smiles at nothing," remarked Miss Valliant, who was not far away; "and don't you think that, under the circumstances, you cut the old fellow up unnecessarily?"

"Not at all. He must learn better. Marcus is a jewel, but an uncut one."

"The true jewel is indeed consistency," murmured Miss Valliant. "My dear Dale, if a few days' solitude can so pervert your naturally excellent disposition would you not better go to Monte Carlo or Bath rather than remain on a monastic mountain? As you are engaged, however, there is some excuse. Engaged men are nearly always distract and—absorbed. I suppose it is due quite as much to the realization of Freedom's clipped wings as to the malady of love. You have been so mysterious about your fiancée, however. And as for Eve, she is quite unavailable the past few days. I might as well be in the society of two deaf-mutes. Of course, love in your case may be to blame—you are evidently absorbed with the thought of the one woman, wherever she may be."

"I am!" said the Honorable promptly. "There is but one in the world, at present. In fact, there is but one world—the place where she is at the time."

"Dear me!" Miss Valliant's glass went up in the semi-darkness. "I am surprised. Still, I suppose that at some time or other all men are alike."

"They are," agreed the Honorable. "Is that the Coble ghost down by the moon-flowers?"

"No, it is Eve. She has an unquiet way of roaming around at night. She has spent too much time here alone, and is so different from most modern girls."

"She is," he agreed.

"May I ask if your fiancée is very brown?" pursued Miss Valliant, "and does she always wear a nose-ring?"

"I have seen blacker complexions, and the last time I beheld her she did not have her nose-ring in."

Miss Valliant rose.

"I might as well go to sleep. It will at least prevent melancholia."

When she had gone he took his stick and limped down toward the dim figure visible beside the moon-flowers. The chatelaine stood with them in her arms, an embodiment of their own beauty, when he stopped before her.

"Miss Coble, I thought perhaps the moon-flowers had come to life. You have been so very good to me, but I came to tell you that I am going tomorrow," he said.

"Yes—if you must. I hope that you will be very happy." Her voice was constrained.

"You mean—" There was a slight pause, filled in by a whippoorwill's cry.

"Cousin Nancy says that you are to be married. I hope that you will be happy."

"I hope that heaven will permit it some day," he said gravely; "but I have never asked a woman to marry me."

"But you said—" She stopped.

"I have said to myself since I first saw her that I would marry her and none other. With reservations, of course. She may not want me. I'm a plain sort of man—" He paused, an overwhelming emotion sweeping over him as he watched her lovely, downcast face. "My mind and heart were made up the first moment I saw her. Oh, tell me, is she ready to give me her most precious possession—herself?"

Her face whitened even in the starlight as she drew back.

"I do not understand—you cannot mean me when—when I said I hated you!" Her hands flew to her face as the flowers dropped to the ground, but he took them gently.

"Sweetest one, you are the only woman in the world! Send me away and you will still possess me!"

"Oh, let me think!" she whispered.

"No, do not think—come!" he pleaded, and drew her into his arms.

HER MIRROR

A CANDID friend am I
 (That creature most abhorred!),
 I never fawn and lie—
 And yet am I adored.
 Her closest confidant
 Am I, both day and night;
 Ah, many a sprig gallant
 Might envy me my right!

I, only, share her dreams—
 Those dreams none other knows.
 I also share her schemes,
 I also ken her woes.
 From me there's not a frown
 Nor secret to conceal.
 She comes in tailor-gown,
 And likewise dishabille.

“How do I look?” she asks,
 On my reply intent.
 I am not one who basks,
 Or fears she may resent.
 I purr not: “Lovely, dear!”
 But answer make, instead:
 “Your hat is on your ear;
 Your nose is shiny-red.”

’Tis I she seeks, the last,
 Last thing ere tripping out.
 Toward me her eyes are cast,
 Returned from church or rout.
 I never fail to get
 Her sweetest smiles, forsooth;
 Her raptest glances; yet
 I tell her but the truth!

EDWIN L. SABIN.



CHOPPING HIM OFF

GABBLEBY—And, to make a long story short—

GRIMSHAW—Thanks, but I know how already; I just walk off like this, as soon as it gets started.

A DEMONSTRATION IN SLOYD

By Philip Verrill Mighels

“K OSSY, there are three good and sufficient reasons why we should be married,” he said, as he separated three of his fingers and held them up for the calm and beautiful Miss Stafford to see; “three reasons as plain——”

“Three?” she interrupted quietly. “Three, Bob? Indeed? And what may they be?”

“Number one is that we both need a home—a sweet, steady little home,” Bob began forensically, checking off one of his digits. “And you and I could make the cleverest and brightest little home in the world. You could do whatever bits of cooking——”

Kossy patiently restrained a number of impulses, all of which, however, expressed themselves in a certain metallicism, visible on her smooth, firm countenance.

“If that is your premier reason, do not delay to amplify, but proceed with the others,” she interpolated judicially.

Bob was vaguely disquieted; he was likewise glad he had reserved his heavier artillery for concluding shots.

“Well, my first reason is logical and sound, isn’t it, Kossy?” he inquired. “You’ll admit my premises, as far as I’ve gone?”

“If your premises comprise the proverbial cottage I shall wish to have something to say when your entire argument has been submitted,” she replied. “What is the second of your good and sufficient reasons?”

“Well, my second—the second is, Kossy, that I love you devotedly.”

She flushed to her dainty ears, half covered by masses of seal-brown hair.

Her composure, however, was undisturbed.

He watched her narrowly. The shot, he reflected, had reached its mark.

“And—your final reason, Bob?” she queried with splendid calm.

“The third is—that you love me.” He said it boldly.

Her eyes blazed for a second. He met her glance defiantly. Her gaze it was that fell. They were silent for a time that seemed to him interminable.

“Is that—is that your entire argument?” she asked, making a desperate overdraft on her show of unconcern. “Is that all that you rely on to—to alter my former decision?”

“Good gracious, Kossy, isn’t that enough?” he demanded. “Could there be three reasons more cogent?”

“Let us examine them quietly and seriatim,” she answered.

“Oh, bother the seriatims! That’s the influence of these infernal clubs for women!” he exploded. “Love-making seriatim, according to Hoyle—or some other parliamentary idiot!”

“I beg your pardon, Bob,” she corrected. “I was not making love.”

“Well, I was—and you should have been! Infernal nonsense, these clubs and women’s movements—ruining good old sensible notions every day. What’s the matter with my reasons?”

She was still self-possessed, which Bob was not.

“That is precisely what we were about to investigate,” she told him.

“According to Hoyle?”

“According to Kossy Stafford.”

“Well?”

She hesitated, but recovering com-

mand of the situation faced the proposition resolutely.

"In the first place, I have no intention of abandoning my work in sloyd in favor of an attempt to bake indigestible biscuit for any man who has once had a mother whose daily achievements apotheosized everything gastronomic from hot cakes to cabbage."

"Oh," said he. Then he added: "This sloyd, I believe, achieves the apotheosis of things sawed out of wood—rolling-pins, potato-mashers, towel-racks and the like."

Her eyes blazed. "Sloyd is a science," she informed him with aggressive hauteur.

"So is brick-laying. So is digging post-holes," he retorted. "So is everything but getting married and being sensible."

By a mighty effort she continued coldly judicial.

"We were attempting to analyze and discuss your three alleged good and sufficient reasons. The first I consider untenable and, in fact, demolished."

"I don't," said Bob. "You haven't advanced a single logical argument to show that it isn't a splendid reason for our marrying."

"Didn't I say I should not abandon my work in sloyd?"

"Well, you can do your sloyd between times, in the basement—if you insist upon chopping the wood. But I thought I could do that myself to save you the labor."

"Mr. Warren, I must ask you not to be wantonly preposterous," she cautioned. "You will treat the subject of my science seriously in my presence, or not at all."

"Oh, I don't care how I treat it, I'm sure. I'll even compromise with you, Kossy. We'll let my first reason rest—not abandoned, just laid aside for the moment. But you can't get around my second. You know how devotedly I love you."

Kossy looked away and answered scholastically.

"No man who speaks so slightly—yes, even insultingly—as you have done of a serious study, a life-work

such as sloyd affords—no such man can truly love a woman who has told him how deeply her heart is in her science."

"What—nonsense!" he gasped in amazement. "Good guns! as if a man in love cares a rap about another child's play science more or less—a thing like this brainless sloyd! Why, you can sloy all over the house, for all of me. I say I love you, Kossy—and that settles that point absolutely."

"Does it, indeed?" she inquired, arching her brows somewhat icily. "If I am unconvinced of the genuineness of your fervor how can the matter be regarded as settled?"

"Hang these schools of argument and associations for developing feminine peculiarities anyhow!" said Bob. "Let both the reasons I've advanced subside temporarily for the sake of the argument, if you so desire; but what will you do with the last? Kossy—you love me—and you know it!"

"In this final reason your premises are false, Mr. Warren," she informed him. "You are quite mistaken."

He looked at her blankly.

"Now see here, Kossy," he presently began, "I've given in to nearly everything you've said, but it's time to call a halt. I know better. We have loved each other for three solid months—and you love me now and that's all there is to it, and it can't be denied."

Kossy colored; her lips would fain have trembled; her eyes could not, for the life of her, meet his gaze. But she said:

"I don't. After all you've said I don't. You are quite mistaken."

Bob was exasperated. "Well, I just ain't! This is all on account of those tom-fool hammers and saws," said he, with warmth and emphasis. "By gracious! if it was any other girl on earth I'd wonder why in the dickens I would wish to marry a woman with such a lot of nonsense in her cupola."

"You need not distress yourself further with thoughts of marrying this particular woman, endowed as you have mentioned," she told him coldly. "I wish you good afternoon."

"Oh, now look here, Kossy, I didn't mean——"

"Miss Stafford, if you please, Mr. Warren. And I prefer not to know what you think you may have meant."

"All right. Where's my hat? I won't stay where I'm not welcome," exploded Bob. "But I'll bet a dollar you'll change your mind. You love me all the same. Good-bye," and with a fine demonstration of his strength of character when he closed the gate he strode off down the road and disappeared.

Angry herself but suddenly a victim to the poignant, inconsequent alarms of her heart, Kossy finally scanned the path to the gate and the highway beyond with eyes illogically dewy.

"Oh, Bob!" she said. And she pressed her hand above her heart.

II

"But, Kossy, you don't mean you shall never, never marry?" insisted Bettie, in girlish awe. "Of course, we all say we'll never be married, and sometimes it helps to hurry proposals along; but none of us ever really means what we say."

Kossy was busy with her bright little saw, reducing the length of a long piece of wood.

"I shall never marry," she repeated. "We girls will be perfectly comfortable here, and I shall lead the life of science to which I am devoted and which I much prefer."

"Oh, I know it's real cute to live like this," agreed Bettie; "but—I don't know."

Kossy assaulted her sawed-off piece of wood with a plane which had a perfectly detestable habit of clogging up with dirty little splinters. Bettie watched with admiration for a moment, after which she added:

"Shall you make all your own furniture?"

"Probably."

"What is this that you're making now?"

"A table for our living-room."

"You're awfully clever, Kossy, and I can't do a thing in the world," sighed poor Bettie. "That's why I'm going to be married. Who does the cooking here?"

"I have had to do it so far," Kossy confessed. "I made some rolls for breakfast."

"Not that one could really eat?"

"Certainly."

"Oh, my, it must feel funny to be so clever!" Bettie sighed again. "It's the sweetest little cottage I ever saw—the sort you think about when you read about love—and so forth." She watched the disciple of sloyd, now at work with a draw-knife, in despair of getting service from the plane, and was presently aware that Kossy was disturbed.

"Anything wrong?" she inquired.

"No—it's all right, practically. I hadn't intended—the draw-knife cut a little too—the wood split. It's very difficult and unsatisfactory wood to handle."

"What part of the table is that piece?"

"It's a leg."

"Oh! Well—couldn't you put that leg on the back part of the table, where it wouldn't show?"

"Yes—oh, yes. It doesn't make any practical difference." She dragged a second length of the lumber across her bench and began sawing it off in masterly style.

During this period of industrial disturbance the door was opened and in there came another young woman—one of the partners in the cottage—whose tiny thumb-end of a nose was clutched in the grip of a pair of glasses of the most intellectual aspect. She and Bettie exchanged greetings and together watched the demonstration in sloyd.

"I wonder if I allowed for the two inches over," mused the carpenter aloud when at length she had severed the timber.

She measured the leg by its predecessor. Even Bettie and the girl with the intellectual aspect saw that the "two inches over" had been forgotten. Kossy looked at the thing in silence.

"I don't see why any harm has been done," said the girl with glasses. "You can use that leg on the back of the table as well as not. No one will ever be the wiser."

"Oh, it doesn't really matter," Kossy agreed; "but it annoys me to make such a blunder."

Then the talk went on and the work continued till presently two more bachelor girls had come to the workshop and a third of the legs for the table had been evolved from the raw material.

An ominous silence fell upon the assembled young women when Kossy paused, so obviously concerned over that third leg.

"You haven't forgotten the two inches over, have you, dear?" asked poor Bettie in sympathetic agony.

"No," answered Kossy. "I haven't. It's long enough, but—"

"Oh, I guess it's all right," said the intellectual-appearing partner, reassuringly.

"You see, I taper them down," explained the worker in sloyd, "in order to make them graceful."

"Isn't that clever!"

"I don't see how she ever does it in the world."

"But," resumed Kossy, "I—I've turned this one over and tapered it the wrong way of my piece."

"Well, we don't care," asserted one of the newcomers. "Just put that leg on the hind part of the table and let it go at that."

"Why, yes," said the second newcomer. "I'm sure it will never be noticed."

Poor Bettie and the girl with glasses began to wonder how many rear sides the table was to have, but they made no comments.

To redeem her reputation for skill Kossy proceeded with vigor to finish the fourth of the legs. The top and several other parts of the table were already cut and finished. Therefore all the young women were finally brought into requisition, and with Kossy to pound in the nails the new piece of furniture began to assume both form and dimensions.

It was all put together at last and there it stood—on three of its legs. The fourth was aloof from the floor for the matter of an inch.

"Of course it won't wobble or creak when it's quite finished?" said the girl of the intellectual cast of glasses.

"Oh, no, I have only just assembled the parts," said Kossy, sucking at a wounded thumb which the hammer had bruised. "I'll make it sufficiently strong."

"And people always have to put a book or something under one leg," consoled Bettie.

"W-e-l-l—not when a table is properly finished," corrected Kossy. "I made it tall purposely so I could saw off the legs afterward and get them all of a length."

"What a perfectly clever idea!" ejaculated one of the bachelors.

"Oh, you know sloyd is *the* thing," informed another. "It goes 'way beyond mere carpenter work. It's a science."

Kossy, meantime, with the aid of Bettie, was turning the table on its side. She then proceeded to measure, square and mark, after which her bright little saw bit off the ends of the three long legs.

When the thing was erected once again, however, it stood in a horribly distracting manner, for its two front legs were taller than the others, and one of the pair on the farther side was at disagreements with its neighbor.

The girls were speechless. Kossy felt her heart begin to sink.

"It's good enough for anyone's living-room," championed one of the girls at last.

"It's so strong and—so clever," assented Bettie.

"We can lean it against the wall—in fact, we shall gain in space that way," said the girl with glasses.

"The—the trouble must be with the unlevel floor of this room," Kossy faltered. "I shouldn't have cut it till we had tried it where it will stand when finished."

"Let's take it in there now."

So in it was carried—and still it stood peculiarly.

"Now I can see exactly how much to cut off from the front ones," asserted the worker in sloyd.

Thereupon the table was turned once more upon its side for further surgical operations.

But Kossy could not have been accustomed to fitting tables to that particular floor, for the wretched construction, when once more placed upon its feet, teetered between two equally distressing attitudes of inebriety.

"And I can't cut it off any more," almost sobbed the carpenter.

"I don't know, dear; it would make a lovely bench," said Bettie.

"It's a good, substantial work-table now," asserted another stoutly. "We shall need something in the back room anyway."

This was the last straw. Kossy felt she should certainly go mad if she stopped in the house another minute.

"I—I've got such a headache, I—shouldn't have tried to—put it together this morning," she faltered. "I'm—going out. I promised to call on my Aunt Matilda this afternoon. Good-bye," and fleeing to her room to get her hat she escaped at the rear of the cottage and ran from the place at the top of her speed.

III

THE girl with the glasses of intellectual aspect was the only one remaining in the house when big Bob Warren came along to make a call.

"Hullo, Carrie," said he. "I just dropped in to see how the bachelor hall is progressing."

"Oh, Bob," said Carrie, who had known him all her life, "we haven't been happy here today at all."

"What's the trouble?"

She pointed to the table, which was apparently leering at everything decorous in the apartment.

"Poor Kossy had such a perfectly heart-breaking time with that," she

imparted, and the whole of the story was soon related.

"H'm," said Bob, reflecting for a moment to himself. Then he turned about.

"See here, Carrie," broke from him suddenly, "I want you to leave me alone with this table for just about twenty-five minutes. Comprehend?"

"You won't smash it up?" said Carrie.

"Not precisely. Kossy's tools in here?" With the table in his possession he went, as if by instinct, to the workshop and closed the door.

"Poor little girl!" he murmured, as he drove the bright little saw that now was rasping a mere wafer from one of the uneven legs.

"Poor little girl!" he said again, as he leveled the thing at length on its pins, straight and true.

"Poor little girl!" he repeated, as he drove in nails and shaved down the legs to a symmetry and uniformity impeccable.

Then when he thumped the thing down in its place on the carpet of the living-room the mastered boards and lengths of lumber shivered obediently and looked so much more than merely respectable as to appear positively attractive.

"Oh, Bob!" cried Carrie, "what in the world did you do to make it so beautiful?"

"Nothing. I gave it a shaking, that's all. Can you see that I've altered the thing at any point?"

"Why—no, but of course—"

"Of course nothing! When Kossy comes you'll tell her simply that it must have settled—like a house. Comprehend?"

And this was done.

But the mother of a child knoweth every freckle, mole and wart upon her brat. Kossy rubbed her eyes when she rested her gaze once more upon the demonstration in sloyd, and while, for a second, she was almost deceived into thinking her work had turned out better than it had promised earlier, yet she missed certain hideousities that made it hers.

She went to the workshop. Sure enough, there on the floor were extra shavings, extra wafers of wood, extra sawdust. And did she not know her own shavings almost to the individual curly cues of fibre? Then her gaze fell upon a crumpled hummock of linen—a handkerchief with which Bob Warren had swabbed his wetted brow.

Something told her before she picked it up that she knew its kind. Then the generous "B," which she herself had worked upon it in snow-white silk, stretched mutely between her fingers.

It was nearly dusk when Bettie, having returned once more to the cottage, stood before the table giving expression to wonder of a description most extravagant.

"To think it could settle like that!" she repeated for the seventeenth time.

"Why, it's perfectly heavenly—back part and all! Kossy, how did it really happen?"

"Oh, tables are just like girls, I suppose," said Kossy, turning away a face suspiciously flushing. "They seem to change their minds."

"Why? You haven't been changing your mind about anything, Kossy?"

"I don't know," confessed the carpenter. "I—don't you think a girl—anyone—is likely to—be the first one caught if—she says she will never—you know—never be married?"

"Kossy! Then you have changed your mind? Not really? Are you really and truly going to marry Bob?"

Kossy blushed—exultantly. She suddenly caught the astounded Bettie in her arms and gave her a wonderful kiss.



THE LAST MAN

IT being ascertained that there was in the whole country a citizen in hiding who had boasted in an idle moment that he had never applied for a pension, a body of patriots started out in search of him.

When finally apprehended, the man appeared dogged and defiant.

"I am the possessor," he declared, "of a robust constitution, and none of my ancestors, so far as I know, ever took part in the War of the Rebellion. Why should I rob the public treasury?"

"And is this," exclaimed the head of the party, "your only excuse? Have you no regard, sir, for the customs and traditions of your sacred land? Don't you know that for years every lawyer and every political party in the country, from motives of pure patriotism, has labored to get every man, woman and child on the pension list?"

The culprit hung his head in shame as the full enormity of his offense burst upon him.

"Now that I recall the fact," he observed with a cunning smile, "my third great-aunt on my mother's side had a stepfather who caught the grip while shingling a house on the outskirts of the Battle of Gettysburg."

"We thought as much," exclaimed the crowd triumphantly, hurrying him on to Washington.



ONE ADVANTAGE

A DA—It must be nice to have money.

I DA—Yes. It relieves one from the temptation to marry it.

IDEALISM AND REALISM

By T. Harrington Price

WHAT THE BOOK SAYS

REGINALD WESTERFIELD paused in the Vere de Vere drawing-room, anxiously awaiting the moment when he could speak his heart to the beauteous Constance.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

Bill Smith waited a moment outside Maggie Brown's house, dusted his clothes, inspected his five-cent shine, pasted down his hair and exclaimed: "Gee whiz! what'll I say to Maggie?"

THE BOOK

With a rustle of silk Constance Vere de Vere swept into the room. She graciously extended her hand to Reginald, who bowed over it with true Westerfieldian courtliness. "Ah, my lady," sighed he, "greeting from your humble servant." She smiled charmingly.

THE REALITY

Maggie Brown was sitting cross-legged, playing "Hiawatha," when Bill Smith walked in. She swung around to see who it was. "How d'ydo, Bill?" said she. "How d'ydo, Maggie?" said he. "Sit down, Bill," said she. Bill sat gingerly on the edge of a chair. Both looked uncomfortable.

THE BOOK

"You are a vision of loveliness tonight," he burst forth impressively, entranced by her beauty and intoxicated by her presence. She dimpled bewitchingly. "Ah," quoth she, "'men were deceivers ever.' 'Flattery, flat-tery, thy name is man!'"

THE REALITY

Bill broke the silence. "Ye're lookin' pretty nifty tonight, Maggie," he said. "Ah, g'on, Bill," said she; "you're only jollyin' like the rest of 'em."

THE BOOK

In his agony of delight and love Reginald observed not her pleasantries. "Loveliest of your sex!" he cried, sinking on his knees before her, "I have long awaited the moment when I might pour forth my heart to you and tell of the passion that is consuming it. I love you, Constance. Can you, oh, my love, consent to be mistress of the Westerfield mansion and make me the happiest of men?"

THE REALITY

Bill moved his chair closer. "No, I ain't jollyin', either," said he, putting his arms around her. "You're a corkin' girl, Maggie, and I like you mighty well. Just say the word and I'll make you Mrs. Smith."

THE BOOK

The beautiful eyes of Constance Vere de Vere drooped before his ardent gaze; her lovely head fell and her sweet lips breathed forth an almost inaudible "Yes."

THE REALITY

Maggie Brown giggled: "I thought you'd never pop the question, Bill. But it's all right. Sure I'll marry you."

THE BOOK

Reginald arose. "Beauteous creature," he cried, "my cup of happiness is filled to overflowing. As the French hath it, '*Rien ne reste de mon cœur, l'amour ôté.*'" Then, placing his arms around her, he imprinted a betrothal kiss upon her alabaster brow.

THE REALITY

"We'll have a swell weddin', Maggie," said Bill. "As the Irishman says, 'Begor, there are two times to have a racket—at yer weddin' and yer wake.'" So saying, he favored Maggie with another hug.



AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

SAID Mother Eve complainingly:
"Adam, the years are long,
And married life, it seems to me,
Is not one grand, sweet song."

Said he, as his mustache he twirled,
"There's none I love like thee.
Where'er I go, in all the world
There's just one girl for me."

"Aye, there's the rub; you're not unkind,
Nor do I ever doubt your love,
But this is always on my mind—
There's no one to be jealous of!"

WILLIAM OSMOND CONE.

THE DOING AND THE UNDOING

By Jane Findlay Evans

IT was the night before the wedding, and Angelica North was awaiting the last visit of the bridegroom before she should be his. It was a chilly November evening, and the rain was hammering against the closed shutters. The two large drawing-rooms, built in the fashion of forty years ago, were usually rather overcrowded with flowers and bibelots, but now they were already cleared for the festivities of the morrow.

She paused by the mantel to look at her reflection in the glass. She seemed never before to have realized her beauty, though she would always have said, perhaps, that it was the most valuable of a good many blessings which a partial Providence had bestowed upon her. But now—it was what Stephen loved her for! She looked with careful approval at the elaborately waved and braided chestnut hair, and at the eyes which Nature gives only with such hair—warm, red-brown, with little dark spots and golden lights. But as she tiptoed and leaned forward, the better to see herself in the high glass, it was at something which might be regarded as a defect that she looked with the greatest interest and even satisfaction—a little group of freckles on her faultless nose and over the upper part of her firm, pale cheeks. For there is something about freckles that suggests youth; and this bride was thirty-six years old, and the man she was to marry on the morrow just ten years younger.

Yet she was not going to the altar without the conscientiously expressed remonstrances of a particularly large circle of friends and relatives. From

the general point of view, there was everything to be said against, and nothing for, a second marriage on the part of Mrs. North. If she must marry again, her friends were unanimous in the opinion that it should be someone who would be "a father to Alan," her son. But Angelica North believed that, having provided Alan with one excellent father, whom Providence in His wisdom had seen fit to remove, she was under no obligation to furnish him with another. He was already sixteen years old, and had spent two years at school at a distance from his mother. At his majority he would have an independent fortune, and even now could in no sense be considered a child.

This evening, mingled with thoughts of her young lover, came recollections of the eve of her first marriage. That had been very different. She almost realized—not quite!—that her present rapture would have been more appropriate then, when in reality her thoughts had been mostly of herself as the centre of a spectacular entertainment. And the spectators tomorrow would be the same, with such exceptions as the thinning out of seventeen years had made.

She had cared gently for that first bridegroom. Indeed, he was her kinsman in a close degree. He had always been an important part of her life, and she had been engaged to him from her earliest youth. She would even have told you then that she was marrying for love; but it seemed to her now in her maturity that she could have known little of the potentialities of love in that sheltered youth, which had

been passed under the restraining influences of an English governess at home, until, orphaned at fifteen, she had been placed in a French convent, where the existence of the other sex was not recognized. At that age, *Byron* to the contrary notwithstanding, the passion is usually for something abstract and half comprehended rather than for the being who is supposed to inspire it.

There are many small cities in our country where most of those who constitute the substance and influence of the community are related by ties of blood. Such a town, of universal cousinship, was *Tonowomba*, where *Angelica North* had spent the greater part of her life. She had never had serious cause to deplore this state of society until she announced her intention of marrying *Stephen Thorpe*. Then she was called upon to renounce or excuse her determination by numbers of persons, whose interest in the matter she regarded as sheer impertinence. She had no explanation to offer, except that she was in love with him—which would have been accepted as sufficient had she been ten or fifteen years younger.

At last the expected ring at the door-bell was heard—hurried, feverish; and then the sound of his step on the stairs came so promptly that the watcher knew that the eager lover had worn no greatcoat to protect him from the November storm. The grinning servant who admitted him remained below, so he burst into the presence of his beloved alone. The hair clung damply to his temples and the shoulder against which he pressed her cheek was wet. Words of solicitude trembled on her lips, but she suppressed them. She must not exhibit an anxiety which savored of the maternal. But she gently released herself from his embrace and drew him to the fire.

“My dear boy,” she said, after a few minutes of silent rapture, “what do you suppose people thought when they saw you running through the streets this horrible night without an overcoat? Did you perhaps wear a hat?”

“Oh, I believe so! What does it matter? Those fools kept me so long—I thought they would never let me off! Angel, I have an idea, a really luminous one. Let us go off now, this minute, and be married! There’s an old army chaplain at the hotel who’d be glad to do it, and think what fun it would be to cheat the wedding guests out of the show! And I should have you twelve whole hours sooner!”

She laughed, but tenderly, and pressed her fingers on the throbbing veins in his temples—her favorite caress.

“Oh, Stephen, you must try to be grown-up! Haven’t you ever heard that women marry for the wedding? And ours is going to be such a fine one!”

“Don’t laugh now, Angel—I can’t stand it. Kiss me, kiss me!”

The front door opened and closed again with a bang. Heavy steps were heard mounting the stairs. The tread was rather deliberately noisy, and *Angelica* thought she detected the intention of warning the lovers of an intrusion. When the door opened and *Alan* entered she was seated, radiant but calm, and *Stephen* was leaning against the mantel at some distance from her.

“Good evening, mother,” he said quietly. *Stephen* winced. “How are you, Mr. *Thorpe*?”

Stephen turned and they shook hands.

Alan North’s figure had a breadth and his face a maturity which seemed beyond his sixteen years. There was even a little prophetic down on his lips. He had been a beautiful child and might be a handsome man; but just now his features were heavy and his feet and hands unnaturally large. His voice was already that of a man. He had begun early to take life seriously. His mother did not realize the depth of feeling which made her coming marriage something like a tragedy to him. With him it was not only a retrospective jealousy on behalf of his dead father, of whom he had been passionately fond, but a realization of the unwisdom of such a step. There had been considerable difference in age be-

tween Alan's father and Angelica, and as she had known him from infancy perhaps her marriage was a little commonplace; but she had little taste for the uncommon. Ample means, a luxurious home, some travel, the decorous admiration which her beauty had always excited—these things had filled her life until two years ago, when she had first seen the man whom tomorrow she was to wed. She was of a placid temper. The ordinary sentiments of wifely and motherly love she had felt to a normal degree. At that time no illness or danger to husband or child had ever occurred to arouse a fiercer feeling.

She had returned to Tonowomba after nearly a year's absence abroad with her husband, during which time the battery of artillery which for many years had garrisoned the little fort at the edge of the town had been replaced by three troops of cavalry fresh from the frontier. With them was Stephen Thorpe, a second lieutenant, who had known but a couple of years of service.

Now, on the eve of her marriage with him, she did not care to think too much of the months which followed their first meeting. Her matronly calm had been stirred, her woman's heart thrilled, for the first time. As for Lieutenant Thorpe, it had seemed at first, when he had learned to know the only desirable woman on earth, and she was an unassailable wife and mother, with a pure pedigree and a large fortune, that the gods who had hitherto fought on his side had turned their faces from him. He had nothing but rejoicing then for the turn of Fate which suddenly made Angelica North a widow, and he scarcely allowed a decent interval to elapse before telling her so—in more discreet language.

Perhaps an intimate knowledge of Stephen Thorpe's career from the cradle to the altar would not have been reassuring to one about to swear love, honor and obedience, and hoping to spend the rest of her days at his side. Not that anything especially discreditable lay behind him, but the potentialities of his temperament were dan-

gerous. He was a spoiled child. He would have said that his life had been punctuated by tragedies; but, as a matter of fact, he had reached manhood without a wish of his being long ungratified, and had come instinctively to expect all things to bend to his behest.

His father, a man of considerable fortune and some eminence, had died while occupying the position of United States Minister at one of the minor European courts, while Stephen, who was born abroad, was still little more than an infant. He was a very beautiful child, of delicate constitution, and his mother was absolutely fitted to bring out what was worst in this rather unfortunate combination. He was the youngest and only surviving one of five children, and to keep him in the world at all was her one thought. He lived abroad until his tenth year, being dragged from one resort and "cure" to another, when what he really needed was a quiet nursery and an occasional spanking. Before he had cut his first tooth he had learned the efficacy of holding his breath as a means of having his wishes immediately regarded. Later, screaming fits which raised his temperature to a degree which his mother considered dangerous were equally effectual. Happily he was not a boy of a naturally violent temper, and he early perceived that much could be accomplished by his beauty and the charm of manner which he exercised even when very young. When he was ten years old his mother saw fit to bring him to America, to prepare him for becoming ultimately President of the United States. Even to her partiality it seemed that an idiomatic and colloquial acquaintance with the English tongue might be regarded as next door to indispensable in that office. His father had been a lawyer, but Stephen's European experiences had planted in his infant breast the conviction that the profession of arms was the only one which became a gentleman. It was not until he had lived for some years in his native land

that he came to a realization of the fact that service under a republic of the nature of ours is not identical with that where the armies are officered by the hereditary lords of the soil. Still, he sought and obtained an appointment to West Point, and, thanks to a facility for "cramming," entered, the youngest of his class.

His career there was somewhat stormy. He maintained a fair standing in his class, but in matters of discipline was deplorably derelict. A crisis came in which several ladies of varying social position were involved, and it is quite sure that Mr. Thorpe's connection with the Military Academy, and perhaps with the service of the United States, would have closed ignominiously if his usual luck had not interfered by striking him low with pneumonia about twelve hours before the damning charges were to be laid before the authorities. The doctors at once pronounced his case hopeless; and, as it would have seemed inhuman to prefer charges against a dying boy, they were allowed to lapse. He lay for a long time in the hospital, in great danger and considerable pain, his mother in attendance.

In the meantime the various officers' wives and daughters and the visiting girls, who had always adhered to his cause, showered attentions upon him. By the time he had been removed, convalescent, to New York, the sternest martinet was not disposed to demur at accepting his resignation from the corps of cadets, on the ground of physical disability.

Six months passed before he was completely restored to health. During this time, however, all the arrangements had been made, through the political friends of his family, to procure him a commission in the army from civil life. By the time he was sufficiently strong to buckle on a sword the sword was there. He was a full-fledged lieutenant nearly two years before his classmates would graduate.

Women had played a not unimportant part in the drama of his life. It

was while still suffering under the really crushing blow of his mother's death that he first met Mrs. North; and it was while administering consolation of a maternal character that she discovered a part of her being hitherto unexplored and undivined, and that Thorpe was shaken by a passion which in no way resembled any feeling that had briefly held him. They parted; and after Thorpe had joined his new regiment in Arizona Angelica took to good works—not as a matter of expiation, for, as I have said, they had parted in time for the woman, who was a good woman, to be spared regrets, and for the man, who was not good, to be consumed with all regret. And then, before the lines in her face had had time to grow hazy in his remembrance, Providence again stepped in and killed Mr. North, whom Thorpe had always detested. And now at last,

The grapes were glowing on the vine,
For Love's own hand to take,
and he was about to press them to his lips.

As Alan drew up a chair Thorpe turned his back upon him, as an excuse lifting one damp foot after the other to the blaze in the chimney. He was physically and mentally nervous and irritable, and every word and movement of the boy caused him a sensation which amounted to pain. He would have been glad of an excuse for open hostility, but Alan exhibited toward him an unvarying politeness, though it was untinged by cordiality.

"Where have you been, dear?" the mother asked.

"Don't you remember, mother? I have been at Douglas's birthday dinner."

The boy smothered all signs of the pain clutching at his throat. That she should forget that celebration of his dearest friend and schoolmate, so long talked of!

"Why, of course, darling—how stupid of me!" She took her son's hand in both of hers and patted it a little absently.

In a moment the boy bent down, kissed his mother's cheek and said good night to both of them.

"Stephen!"

The face Thorpe turned to her was startlingly pale. He was always at the mercy of his emotions.

"Why, dear, what is it?" she said, laying her hand on his shoulder. He shook it off.

"Don't call me *dear* in the same tone you just used to that—that—"

"Stephen!" she interrupted, herself shaken by his excitement. She sank into her chair again, and he turned and threw himself at her feet, burying his face in her dress. She leaned her cheek down to him. She put her arms about his shoulders, which were heaving with something like sobs, and crooned to him in a wordless voice. He grew quieter and drew her hand to his lips.

"I don't believe he can be yours," he murmured.

"Never mind, my own sweetheart—I am yours." And she soothed him with tenderest caresses. She had always entertained a well-balanced contempt for anything hysterical, even in a woman, and yet a calmer Stephen would not have been so dear to her.

II

FIVE years had passed since the marriage which had seemed even more of a lottery than is usual in such a contract—a sufficient time to decide the question of its success.

Contrary to the expectation quite generally expressed by their friends, the difference in the ages of husband and wife was less to be remarked than at the time of their marriage. Angelica had changed but little. Thorpe, on the other hand, looked older than his years. There were vertical lines between his brows, and his olive skin had taken on a somewhat sallow tinge. The hair on his temples, too, was noticeably gray. He looked a little worn and very discontented. He had had no tangible quarrel with existence, but

events did not move rapidly enough for him. There had been alternations of service and leave, the latter spent in rather riotous living, the field service performed with fervid enthusiasm, the garrison duty with languid perfunctoriness. There was seldom any domestic friction. Angelica's household machinery was never allowed to creak.

The end of the first year had brought them a daughter, rapturously received by the father, until he remembered that his wife had borne a son to another man. This constituted a distinct grievance, which faded, however, with the rapture, when the baby ceased to be a new toy.

But as a soldier Captain Thorpe—he had won rapid promotion—felt himself to be a victim of cruel circumstances. In the first place, his regiment had not been ordered to Cuba for the war with Spain. That had made existence well-nigh intolerable to him and likewise to his friends, for Thorpe was not one to suffer in silence. He had chafed, raved, worn out the patience of the War Department in his efforts for transfer, exchange or a volunteer commission. But Captain Thorpe was not popular with the War Department.

When the brief campaign was over there were few survivors who were more sick or sorry from the hardships of it than was poor Stephen, in whose ears the oft-repeated names of Santiago and San Juan Hill made a hideous din. Then came partial compensation in the orders sending his regiment to the Philippines. But it seemed that he could taste no cup without an infusion of bitterness, and the drop of gall that now poisoned his drink was the fact that Alan North, a mere boy in years, and totally without military experience, had, apparently without serious exertion, obtained a majority in a volunteer regiment, and preceded that seasoned warrior, his stepfather, to Manila.

Angelica, who was not enthusiastic about the profession of arms, was somewhat displeased with Alan for adopting it, even temporarily, and without con-

sulting her, especially as it so fretted Thorpe. She pointed out to her husband, however, that Alan had probably not followed his course exclusively with the idea of making him wretched. But Stephen was tormented by the remote contingency that, under certain crucial circumstances which he pictured, the two regiments, regular and "Mex.," would be together, and that he would be subject to the commands of Alan; and Alan's mother, blameless as she was, came in for a share of his resentment.

Stephen had now been in the Philippines for four months, and had seen some service in Northern Luzon. Alan's regiment was stationed on one of the southern islands, and there seemed no prospect of Stephen's fears being realized. Angelica did not accompany him to Manila, but, with her four-year-old daughter, followed him on a liner, having lingered for some weeks in China.

She had landed the day before, and they were at tiffin in the dining-room of the Oriente Hotel. Stephen was temporarily in Manila on a court-martial, and so had been enabled to meet his wife. Her presence was an unmixed pleasure to him. He was very sure of her sympathy and tenderness, and he had discerned symptoms of weariness on the part of his brother officers under the oft-told tale of his grievances. He had spent the better part of the night in pouring them into Angelica's ear and her interest had never flagged.

She had been, truth to tell, somewhat shocked at her husband's appearance. He had had no illness, but his life in the province which his regiment was actively pacifying had been rough and hard, and his career in Manila was not exactly in the nature of rest. The restraints of a home, were they to be obtained, would certainly be beneficial to him.

Angelica had carefully refrained from all mention of Alan until now, when, having something necessary and possibly unpleasant to communicate, the moment seemed favorable. They were

alone at a table in the corner of the dining-room. A punkah was waving gently above them. The execrable meal before them was made possible by a well-cooled bottle of champagne. The clink of ice was music to the man who set much store by luxuries and had been for months cut off from them. His court had adjourned for the day. He had just enjoyed a cold shower-bath and was clad in a crisp, white duck uniform. His wife opposite to him was most pleasing to the eye in elaborate frills of diaphanous white. There were a dozen or more persons scattered about the room whom he was pleased to see, having grown murderously tired of his own regimental messmates. His child, whose appearance was esthetically gratifying, was chattering sweetly with her Chinese nurse in the corridor without. Undoubtedly life looked better worth living than for some time past.

They had lunched as elaborately as the menu admitted, and Stephen was lingering over coffee and cognac and a cigarette before Angelica could make up her mind to disturb his enjoyment by the introduction of her son's name.

"I had a long letter from Alan at Hong Kong," she said.

He made an impatient movement. "Any more promotion? Is he perhaps expecting to be one of the new batch of generals?"

She laughed indulgently. "No—unless you regard it as promotion to become a married man."

"Married! You don't mean to say he has taken unto himself a Filipino bride?"

"Stephen!"

"No, of course not—Alan is not an impetuous youth. But who is the favored one?"

She ignored the offensiveness of his tone while she hesitated a moment before replying.

"Camilla Arden," she said slowly.

"Camilla Arden! Oh, by Jove!"

He dropped his unconsumed cigarette into his unfinished coffee and pushed back his chair.

"Impossible!"

"Strange as it may seem, I don't

think Alan is a person to make such an announcement without absolute certainty. Besides, I have had a letter from—from Miss Arden."

"Oh, by Jove!" he repeated. "I should like to see that letter," he added, with lively interest.

"I regarded it as confidential and destroyed it," she answered rather coldly.

"But why, why should Camilla Arden want to marry Alan?" he said, with a rather brutal disregard of the fact that he was talking to Alan's mother.

"You forget that Alan is—has a great deal of money," she rejoined.

"And really, Stephen, I think more people would be inclined to ask why Alan should want to marry Camilla Arden, in view of—well, her previous career. I am not pleased, but you know I never attempt the impossible, and Alan is not easily influenced."

Thorpe was musing, apparently, without attending very closely to his wife's remarks.

"With Miss Arden there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," he observed, smiling.

"Yes, I remember both the English peer and the Hungarian tenor," she said sharply. "So do others—which fact enhances Alan's value." Her unusual acrimony arrested Stephen's attention.

"She is older than Alan—much older," he said.

"We are the last who ought to cavil at that," she said. "Probably our example determined them."

Stephen uttered one of his sweetest laughs.

"Are you trying to scratch and bite, Angelica? Don't, please, dear—it's not your way. Poor little Camilla!"

"Why poor?—and she is certainly not little."

"When did you know her?" asked Thorpe rather sharply.

"Oh, we crossed to Bremen once together, years ago, when she was scarcely grown up. She was very seasick and very disagreeable to her mother."

"Well, I can sympathize with her there," said Stephen, who was not a good sailor.

"Since we are comparing reminiscences of my future daughter-in-law, you might tell me your experience. I am not sensitive—yet."

"God forbid!" he exclaimed with an impatient movement, giving an order to a passing servant.

"What do you mean, Stephen? When did you know her?"

"Oh, I knew her when we were children," said Thorpe. "We spent a winter at the same hotel in Cairo, when I was ten and Camilla about six. Yes, I think there was about four years' difference between us."

"Probably the same difference still exists," she remarked drily.

"I doubt it!" he laughed. He had rolled another cigarette and sent for another cup of coffee. "It is probably much greater now."

"You have known her since?"

He hesitated a moment. "Yes," he answered.

"Well?"

"Sufficiently well to conclude that the head on Alan's young shoulders is not so inappropriately old as I had imagined."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing," he said impatiently. "Even Alan must know that his fiancée has been—well, not without experiences, considering how the newspapers have exploited her. I—admire her," he broke off with a laugh.

"I haven't told you the worst," she said. "That girl is on a trip round the world with the Blairs. They are in Japan now. I am supplied with the address of her Tokio bankers and Alan has persuaded her to promise to come here. He hopes to get a leave or temporary duty in Manila, and he expects me to shelter and chaperon her. The Blairs are not coming here."

Stephen flushed angrily. "Very insolent of Alan, I think."

"You must remember, Stephen, Alan has asked very little of me since—"

"Oh, I know!" he interrupted im-

patiently. "What are you going to do?"

"I wrote Alan that I must first see about getting a house here, and if I succeeded I should do as he wished. One might as well make a virtue of necessity, you know."

"You said nothing of consulting me, I suppose?"

"When I wrote I hardly hoped to see you so soon, and as you are to be here so short a time I can't see what difference it makes to you, anyhow."

"Oh, very well," he said, rising. "After all, I suppose I must regard myself as an outsider when it is a question as to what you and Alan wish."

III

ANGELICA was fortunate in the matter of a house, always a difficult question in Manila. A staff officer of considerable rank was unexpectedly ordered to America, and the Thorpes secured his quarters, which had previously belonged to the Government—a large and airy house in the Ermita district, on one of the little streets parallel to the sea, set in the midst of a typical tropical garden, with a balcony hanging over the water—a rare and delightful feature.

While Thorpe was alternately rejoicing in it and bewailing the fate which would shortly take him back to the provinces, the day came of Miss Arden's expected arrival. Alan had failed to get a leave, and indeed had withdrawn the request in view of a recent outbreak among the natives with whom he was stationed; so it fell to Captain Thorpe's lot to meet his stepson's fiancée.

The Hong Kong steamer on which she was to arrive was anchored some distance out in the bay; but although the launch upon which Stephen approached it was small, the sea rough and he but an indifferent sailor, his most vivid thoughts were not of to-day. They leaped back over the years of chances and changes to the time when he had last known Camilla

Arden, when he and she were both young—pathetically young, it seemed to him now—and when for a while they had played not unimportant parts in each other's lives. Then, they had parted not as friends. She had lied to him, beyond doubt, he reflected; and though Thorpe, in his sentimental relations, was quite capable of juggling with the truth, he exacted the most limpid candor from the women whom he honored with his admiration.

As he drew near the steamer he brought his errant thoughts back to the present, and chuckled a little at the idea of the stolid Alan fancying he could anchor down this butterfly. He hoped she would lead him a dance. Her reasons for wanting to marry the young man were obvious enough. He did not blame her. But he considered it distinctly indelicate on her part to force relations with himself and his wife. Still, he was tingling with curiosity when he caught the first glimpse of her leaning over the rail.

It was very unmistakably she and so little changed that the sight of her gave him an odd shock. He was too accustomed to his own acknowledged beauty ever to have given much thought to it; but at the sight of this woman who had known him, and possibly cared for him, in his young perfection he felt the weight of the years which had lined his face and frosted his temples. Would she recognize him? Even her dress—and Stephen noticed such things—was characteristic of the Camilla he had known. She was in blue linen, fresh and cool, with much filmy embroidery, distinctly unseaworthy, and a hat and parasol of white chiffon. He had crossed the Atlantic with her once, and remembered the serene indifference she had shown as to the proper attire for the sea, to whose fashions she was certainly accustomed. Indeed, he could not remember ever to have seen her clad in what might be called a practical manner. Her shoes had always been the reverse of "common sense," her skirts long and com-

plicated, very diaphanous in the summer and very velvety and furry in the winter.

She was gazing rather anxiously at the faces which were crowded on the two launches which approached her steamer at the same time.

"Looking for Alan, I suppose!" he said to himself with the first pang of personal jealousy he had felt for his stepson since the early days of his passion for the boy's mother. But just then her eyes caught his, and the smile of complete joy which broke over her face left him with no feeling but one of contentment.

When he stood beside her on the deck, with her hands in his, while she looked in his face with a certain sweet anxiety and called him "Steenie," time indeed slipped back, and they seemed to be together again between a colder sea and a grayer sky.

Angelica was agreeably disappointed in her son's fiancée. There was little trace of the peevish girl she remembered in the gentle, well-poised woman, who spoke of Alan with such a restrained propriety of warmth. Angelica, like many persons whose psychological structure is simple, was not without some shrewd discernment of character; but if she suspected complications in Camilla Arden's she chose not to draw them forth or to dwell on anything beyond the very pleasing physical and moral exterior which that young woman presented.

As for Stephen, three days after her arrival he was frankly happy in the situation, especially in the fact that Alan was absent and likely to remain so for some time.

This evening he seemed to be lapped in absolute well-being. They were sitting, he, Angelica and Camilla, on the balcony overhanging the sea. It was about nine o'clock, a dusky, moonless night. They had dined luxuriously and were amiably and lazily disputing about the position of the Southern Cross.

"A most ridiculously overrated constellation," declared Stephen. "But I tell you what is not over-

rated, Miss Arden—the fireflies. You should see them in a certain group of acacias I know of on the Calle Herran. You shall see them! Come on!" He sprang up and held out his hand to her. "It's only a step."

"But I don't feel like taking steps, do you, Mrs. Thorpe?"

Stephen had not included his wife in the invitation, nor did he now.

"You need not take a single one," he said, addressing himself to Miss Arden. "I told Manuelo to bring the carriage back about this time. I thought I should go to the club, but I'd rather show you the fireflies. Come!"

And she went. Angelica was alone with only the Southern Cross and the lights over at Cavite to look at and in her ears the sound of hoarse laughter, borne down from the English Club, where dinner was still being somewhat uproariously enjoyed. And Stephen and Camilla Arden drove off in the little victoria, locally known as a "milor," in quest of fireflies.

Their leisurely progress through the neighboring streets, new to Camilla in their evening aspect, was pleasant. Soon they came to the Calle Herran, and after passing the convent, then still the Second Reserve Hospital and a tumble-down barrack, the road was dark. The marshy meadows lay black on either side. The sky above them was dim, but it seemed that the acacias which bordered the road and were grouped in the fields had drawn down all the stars from heaven and tangled them in a dazzling dance among the leaves. About the trunks of these same trees climbed the moon-flower—the *dama de noche*—its whiteness helping the fireflies to lighten the dusk and to perfume it with the very essence of some wild sentiment.

It was the first time that Thorpe and Miss Arden had been alone together. For some time they were silent. Camilla seemed an appropriate gem for such a setting. Her face, surrounded by a mass of close-braided, ash-blond hair, looked as pale as the moon-flowers. Captain Thorpe spoke of it,

but she only laughed and returned an irrelevant answer. Again the silence endured for some moments, when Thorpe leaned forward abruptly to look in her face.

"Why did you do it, Camilla?"

"Do what, Steenie? You know I have done so many things."

"Oh, doubtless! But you know what I mean. Why are you going to marry Alan North?"

She turned her eyes away from him.

"For love," she said.

"I'm serious, Camilla. Why—why—why?"

"I am serious, too. Why should I not be in love with him? He is young and handsome and rich. Oh, there's every reason!"

"Which means that there's none, and you know it. Camilla, you can't treat me quite as you do other people, ever. Don't you remember—?" He took her hands and held them hard and fast in his.

"Don't you remember?" he repeated.

She answered with a little quiver of indignation in her voice. "Yes, I remember, of course. But I should think that you, Steenie, would not care to recall unnecessarily what—we both remember! Let us change the subject and go home."

"No—no! I haven't begun to talk to you yet. I have only been experimenting with you—trying to adjust you!"

"Give it up. I'm not adjustable."

"No, only adorable!"

"Oh, don't, please! That is so puerile—with me. It is too late for you to try the teeth of your fascinations on me, Steenie. Let us ignore everything, in the name of all decency!"

By this time they had crossed the little bridge, passed by the ruined convent and were well in the country, on the road to Santa Anna. He leaned back and sighed.

"Very well. I suppose it is for you to set the key of our intercourse. But you must tell me a little more before I can catch the tune to which we are to jig. Tell me about the other men."

"What other men?"

"Oh, I dare say they are as the sands of the sea! But you know whom I mean—Lord Altamont and that Hungarian beggar."

"Steenie, don't ask me! They were both brutes, but it was of course partly my fault in both cases. But for the publicity my mother was to blame—through vanity in the first case and—well, lack of judgment in the other. You can imagine. You know how I was situated—still am, indeed, except for Alan."

Yes, Stephen knew. Brought up in a house divided against itself, with a mother inconceivably vain, foolish and frivolous, who was at the same time proud and jealous of the beauty her only child had inherited from her, with a fortune totally inadequate for the follies and extravagances of a menage continually moved from continent to continent to follow the whims and schemes of Mrs. Arden—Camilla indeed had unusual excuses for all that had been laid at her door. Her father had given up the struggle and quietly blown his brains out when Camilla was sixteen; and the mother, finding herself a widow, had entered into competition with her daughter's radiant youth. Thence ensued some of the most painfully complicated episodes of Camilla's life.

With all of this Stephen was fully acquainted, and in a general way gave these circumstances their full value in influencing the girl—except where her life touched his. There Stephen's egotism forbade logic.

"You don't know how it hurt me, Camilla, to have you so—so in the public eye." He believed himself as he spoke; but when the details of the two broken engagements were rolled unctuously under the scandalous tongues of the newspaper reporters Thorpe had not been guiltless of that pleasant titillation which most of us experience when those of our acquaintance are apprehended in wrong-doing. Perhaps Camilla understood something of this, for she laughed a little as she answered:

"You put it politely, Steenie! But

I'd rather you did not put it at all. Let sleeping dogs lie! You don't know how grateful I am to Mrs. Thorpe for the way she has received me. She is so—so—perfect herself, and so entirely conventional with it all, that it must be hard for her to have my stormy record embraced in her family history."

He turned the blaze of his great, dark eyes on her. She could see their expression even in this dim dusk.

"I am the person to whom it is all hard," he said.

"Don't, Steenie! You mustn't even play at that sort of thing. We must go home. It is late."

IV

THE days grew into weeks and still Alan lingered in his southern island, engaged in more or less dangerous occupations, which caused his mother, and presumably his affianced, some anxiety. The court-martial of which Captain Thorpe was a member continued in session, though, owing to the necessity in several cases of bringing witnesses from distant points, there sometimes occurred long intervals between meetings. So Stephen had considerable time on his hands.

Though Miss Arden might be supposed to be chafing at the prolonged absence of her lover, which was causing her to extend her visit to his mother far beyond the time originally intended, the climate of Manila seemed to agree admirably with her. At first Angelica had been disposed to wonder at the general verdict which had rather noisily proclaimed Miss Arden's beauty. Her hair, though peculiarly abundant and fine, was almost colorless in its blondness. It made her pale, smooth skin seem sallow; and her extreme thinness approached almost to emaciation. There was, however, her really classic forehead, with straight, delicate brows, many shades darker than the hair, and there were the melancholy gray eyes beneath them. Her mouth, too, was an indisputably beautiful

feature, though it had more than a suggestion of sadness in repose.

But now, to the woman who was watching her with a really kindly interest, there seemed a subtle change in the girl. The damp warmth of the climate drew the stray strands of her naturally straight hair into softening curls about her face. There was sometimes an exquisite, fugitive color in her cheeks. The drooping grace of her figure became more alert. Angelica's admiration was ungrudging. Camilla's beauty was of a less obvious order than her own, even now, but after all it was undeniable.

On the other hand, the metropolitan delights of Manila had lost their reviving effects on Thorpe. He was even more than normally difficult. Oriental servants fortunately offer a safe outlet for nerves; but even after freely expending his irritation on the various Alexandros and Juans who cumbered the house and stable, there was a considerable quantity left over, from which Angelica, the child, and not infrequently Miss Arden, suffered.

The two women were much together and formed very definite ideas concerning each other. Miss Arden's estimate of her hostess was tolerably correct, Angelica's of Camilla less so; but both were restrained and companionable—civilized, as Camilla would have expressed it. The mornings were spent in driving about and doing mild sightseeing and shopping and visiting. Stephen usually came home to tiffin at half-past twelve and hurried grumbling away if there was an afternoon session of his court. Then Angelica and Camilla went to their rooms for the siesta, from which they emerged refreshed for the afternoon drive at half-past five. Stephen generally joined them on the Luneta as one of what was likely to be a numerous company assembled about their carriage.

Miss Arden's engagement to Alan North was not announced nor even suspected, and her attractions met with the very general appreciation to which she was accustomed. There was more or less gaiety at the time—dinner

dances at the club, occasional balls and many moonlight launch parties to Cavite or up the Pasig.

About this time little Esther Thorpe began to show the effects of the continuous heat. Her symptoms were not alarming, but they disturbed Angelica principally because the doctors pronounced that, if they continued, the child must go away, at least as far as Japan. She did not feel that it would be advisable to leave Stephen at this time, and her guest, whom Alan in his rare and irregular letters implored her to detain, made another complication.

And so it came about that the child's mother withdrew herself somewhat from the diversions still pursued by Stephen and Miss Arden, and that the character of those diversions changed slightly when she ceased to participate in them. For one thing there was frequently a considerable interval between the time when they left some scene of revelry and that at which they crept up the stairs on tiptoe, to avoid waking the child or the mother—who was too good a wife ever to sit up for her husband's return. Stephen declared to Camilla that dancing and closed rooms—and people and things in general—made his head ache and unfitted him for the administration of justice on the ensuing day; whereas prolonged enjoyment of her unshared society, with a large outdoor background, had a wholesome and stimulating effect. She ridiculed his exactions but ridiculed them gently, and generally ended by subscribing to them.

At last came the news that Alan might soon be expected. He was not taking a leave, but the battalion of which he was in command was about to be relieved by troops from another regiment. As there was no regular line of boats connecting Manila with his island, no cable, and indeed no calculable means of communication, the date of his arrival was uncertain. In fact, the news that he might be expected was not received directly from him, but by the orders for his Department.

Stephen was profoundly depressed

at the prospect of seeing his stepson and made no effort whatever to conceal it. Camilla was feverishly jubilant and Angelica calmly glad.

The old grievance of Alan's superior rank was reopened and bemoaned.

"But, my dear boy, it's only Mex!" laughed his wife.

"Yes, Captain Thorpe, and I promise you Alan and I sha'n't rank you out of quarters, as that disrespectful army girl whom I have heard of did when she married a man who ranked her father."

Stephen abruptly pushed back his chair from the table—they were at dinner—and went out on the balcony without apology. There was a shade of reproach in Angelica's glance at Camilla as she called to him:

"Do come back, Stephen! We have mango ice, and you know how you adore it!"

But he was obdurate, even before the seductions of his favorite dessert. He alleged the usual headache and said the punkah-rope squeaked, which was a libel on Angelica's housekeeping. So she had the coffee carried out on the balcony, and she and Camilla followed it. She went to Esther almost immediately, however, and Stephen and Camilla were alone.

It was a wonderful night. Such a moon as can scarcely be dreamed of out of the Tropics was making the sea almost intolerably brilliant. Stephen was leaning over the balustrade in gloomy contemplation of the glory before him. Camilla lay in a long chair and watched his discontented profile with a half smile.

"Your temper is really intolerable, Steenie. Don't you think you are getting a little old for the role of *enfant gâté*?"

"Oh, my temper! What do you think of the taste of your remark about quarters? I call it simply vulgar."

"Don't be rude. Don't you see how futile it is to ignore facts? Besides, they can't be ignored for long," she added with a sigh. "There is no use in playing the ostrich, Steenie."

"Yes, that has always been my fool

way! I have tucked my head in the sand—and, God knows, my heart has suffered!"

She was silent for a few minutes, looking dreamily out to sea at the lights which shone from Cavite.

"It's a long time since you and I were children, Steenie; but do you remember that time—it was in Cairo, on the veranda of Shepheard's Hotel, when we differed about something and I hit you in the face—and you hit me back, Steenie, more than blow for blow! You were not a chivalrous little boy. Our nurses separated us and our mothers stopped speaking."

"What of it?" he asked sulkily.

"Nothing; only that you have changed singularly little considering the lapse of years." He turned his back to the moon and stood facing her.

"And you are still giving me blows," he said.

"And you are still hitting back. Let us have a truce, Steenie! We shall soon be related—connected at least—No, don't!" as with a muttered word of imprecation he started to enter the house. "Try to be grown-up!"

Singularly enough, at that moment he remembered that his wife had used those same words on the eve of their marriage.

"You know we are going to the Marches' ball tonight. I must go and dress." She rose abruptly.

"I had forgotten," he answered. "Couldn't we cut it and go for a drive instead?—along the beach, for instance, far up. Think what it would be on such a night!"

"We could, but we will not. We are going to the Marches' ball, and we are going early and coming home early. I wonder if we can't persuade Mrs. Thorpe to go, too. I don't believe there is anything really the matter with Esther."

"Try," he said with a short laugh, "and if you succeed I can stay at home. One chaperon ought to be enough for a young woman so—*expérimentée*, we'll say, as you!"

"You are intolerable, Steenie!"

Angelica, as Camilla had expected,

refused to accompany them, and the rather long drive to another quarter of the city was accomplished by Thorpe and Camilla almost in silence. He looked at her much though, and with little effort at convention. She had never seemed to him so exquisite. Her gown was perhaps described by the artist who created it as pale green, but it was really nebulous in color as in texture. She wore a twisted rope of seed pearls about her throat, with an old-fashioned pendant of emeralds. As they stepped into the carriage he wound about her slender, bare arm a necklace of jasmine, ending with a tassel of *ihlang-ihlang*, which he had bought from a passing native girl as he waited on the pavement for Camilla. Its cloying perfume floated about her.

As they turned into the street which was their destination they found it thronged with carriages and cabs of every description. Thorpe decided that it was best to leave the carriage at the corner of the street and there make tryst with Manuelo, rather than fall into what was believed to be a line and receive a number, in the accepted fashion. The crawling advance and the polyglot shrieks made him intolerably nervous. So they walked up the broad drive from the massive iron gates surmounted by stone pineapples to the brilliant house.

When they had reached the head of the great stairway and had greeted their host and hostess the ball was well under way. It was the house of a high American official, and the American beauty and chivalry of Manila were there in force mingled with a piquant sprinkling of native charms.

The strains of a military band led them to the ballroom. There the pretty, airy dresses of the Americans and the white uniforms of the officers mingled picturesquely, Camilla thought, with the costumes of the Manila women, made in their national fashion, but of heavy brocades and satins. They were glittering with diamonds and pearls and were whirling about with great apparent satisfaction.

Miss Arden was surrounded at once

with clamorous applicants for dances, but she always refused to dance in Manila. She confided to Stephen that she preferred to see others damp and red rather than present such an appearance herself; though the most ingenious imagination would have been taxed to picture her as either the one or the other. She left Thorpe's side, however, and, having gently rid herself of the rest of her cavaliers, with some slight malice selected one, a Major Maybrook, with whom to wander away to admire the vast house, with its ingenious decorations, in which the military and the tropical united.

Thorpe himself carefully selected the reputed American beauty of Manila and sought a similar seclusion in which to assure her of his absolute conviction of her incontrovertible claim to that title. It was the one subject upon which she was capable of real eloquence; so, after the opening sentences of acknowledgment and homage, Stephen was spared further conversational effort and was able to lose himself in conjectures as to Camilla. A polite pretense of listening to Mrs. Aubrey's talk about herself scarcely interrupted his train of thought. It was more than an hour later that he tore himself away from her, with a most convincing show of reluctance, at the approach of an invading horde of admirers who had but just discovered her retreat.

He found Camilla and Major Maybrook still tête-à-tête. He did not know that she had sat out dances and strolled about with half a score of others since he had left her, and they had a confidential air; though, as a matter of fact, their conversation had been as impersonal as is possible between man and maid under such circumstances and with such accompaniments.

Maybrook and Thorpe had known each other long and cordially disliked each other during the same period. Their hatred dated from the time when Stephen was a cadet and Maybrook an instructor at West Point. Stephen blamed Maybrook largely for the troubles which had come near over-

whelming him there, and had never forgiven him, though they had resulted in his speedier appointment and promotion. He was not disposed to regard him more kindly since he had begun to shower attentions on Miss Arden, who did not conspicuously discourage him. Maybrook, who was unmarried, was rather aggressive in recognizing and insisting on Thorpe's character of benedick, in season and out of season, and on that score assuming his duties as host and chaperon to Miss Arden to be burdensome to them both. And so he was disposed to resent on her behalf Thorpe's rather peremptory invitation to her to go and see the garden. She herself thought that it would have been better if Stephen had kept away for a longer time; but he controlled his temper so nicely under Maybrook's jocularities about "old married men," and his assumption that Miss Arden cared only for the society of those matrimonially eligible, that she took his arm and let him lead her out into the night.

Their progress was much interrupted by applicants for dances, nearly all of whom seemed to regard Stephen in the same light as did Maybrook. So it was some time before they reached the soothing twilight of the garden. Many couples had set them the example, and there was little more seclusion than in the house. But at last, in the very farthest corner they found a great banyan tree, in the pendant roots of which had been built a tiny nipa summer-house. By this time Thorpe's nerves and temper both were badly frayed.

"Camilla," he began, "I don't want to quarrel with you——"

"No, you never do," she interrupted.

"——but," he continued, "it really hurts me to see you flirt with a man like Maybrook. He is so awfully far from being a gentleman and so near being a fool!"

"You will be telling me next that Alan wouldn't like it."

"Oh, damn Alan!" He started up from the rustic bench where they were sitting. His face looked ghastly in

the dim light which fell through a green-tinted lantern.

"What do you think might be said of my flirting with you?" she said in a low voice. He was beside her again.

"You don't flirt with me! Tell me you don't!"

"I don't believe I do," she said almost inaudibly.

"Camilla, this is intolerable. I can't stand it. You know what a poor, weak devil I am. I'm at the end of my endurance—at the end of my sanity! I'm going to ask tomorrow to be relieved from this court and go back to the regiment. I have not slept for nights and nights, thinking of—of—when Alan comes."

"I think it would be better, Steenie." The voice which acquiesced in the sentence of exile was a little broken.

"I'm not quite a blackguard, you know, but there are limits to everything—and I know you want to be—are going to be—good, dear." His voice was husky and the tears stood in his eyes. Neither spoke for a few moments; then they heard laughing voices approaching, and Maybrook and another officer came up, walking on either side of the beauty of Manila. Camilla, reluctantly followed by Thorpe, stepped forward to meet them. She promptly quelled Maybrook's facetiousness by saying coldly:

"Captain Thorpe is ill and we are going home. But I suppose, Captain Thorpe, that we must go upstairs first and say good night and thank you to Mrs. March."

"But it is so early, and you have had no supper," protested Maybrook. "I was just coming to ask if I might have the honor—"

"Oh, it's too warm for supper. We'll stop and get a glass of champagne on the way up. Good night!" And Major Maybrook, looking curiously at Thorpe's white face and drawn lips, suspected for the first time that his role was not exclusively that of chaperon to his beautiful guest.

When they had found their carriage, and wakened the slumbering Manuolo from dreams of glory in the cockpit,

Thorpe directed him what route to take toward home. It was a somewhat circuitous one, but it would bring them through certain narrow, twisting streets which they knew well—where the acacia-encircled houses were set back in their walled gardens, where the hibiscus burned beside each gate and the moon-flowers twined about the stone walls and climbed the stem of every palm tree. It was already late, except for such gay folk as themselves. The moon was setting. The moon-flowers showed but dimly, but their breath mingled maddeningly with a little night breeze just blown up from the sea.

Stephen was singularly silent—for him. His emotions were seldom articulate. At last he turned to look long at Camilla.

"Lady of the night!" he murmured. "Do you know, Camilla, that you and I have known each other only by night?—lately, I mean. We have never spoken to each other by daylight."

"You forgot luncheon and dinner and the Luneta," she said.

"Oh, that doesn't count! I mean when we have been really together."

"You might add that our intercourse has been exclusively peripatetic," she replied laughing. And then she went on rather hurriedly: "That perfume is really demoralizing. I think I must suggest to the Provost Marshal General that if he wants Manila ever to become a really well-behaved town he must have the *dama de noche* all dragged up by the roots."

"How can you be flippant. Camilla—now and here!"

"Ah, Steenie, you remember there was a time when I was—not flippant—oh, a long time ago—

"When we were young, and lutes were strung,
And love-lamps in the casement hung!"

"And you can quote poetry about that time!" he said reproachfully. She made an almost hysterical effort to retain her light tone.

"Oh, as for that, you know it was

always my weakness. Other people have been so obliging as to give my thoughts and feelings so much better expression than I can myself! I believe I should think in poetry—other people's, *bien entendu*—if I were dying." Her struggle after levity was unavailing. Stephen seized her hands and drew her toward him. But she pulled back.

"But you are not dying—you are living—oh, living!" he said breathlessly.

"Ah, I am done with living, Steenie! I think the very end has come tonight. Let go my hands, dear."

"You haven't called me 'dear' since—since—"

"Since you ceased to want to be called so! Don't forget that, Steenie! It sounds awfully puerile, but if you had been—well, in earnest, let us say—at that time I might have been—not a very good woman, perhaps; I fear my potentialities for good are inconsiderable—but—different."

"Don't talk that way, Camilla—of what either of us might have been. This is not the time—this is now—and I, at least, am most wretched."

"Do I seem very hilarious? I have put it off, but you and I must have a settling day, Steenie. You thought ill of me at that time, and you had some reason. But you know what my excuses were—oh, you know it all!"

"Yes, I know it all, but we have forgiven each other, so what has it to do with us now?"

"Nothing, I suppose, only—I should like to know—perhaps you, too, had your excuses when you—jilted me."

"You gave me every reason to believe that you were going to jilt me!" he rejoined, releasing her hands and turning away.

She laughed a little. "And so you thought you would forestall me! Well, I should have been quicker to take the initiative. But you did not love me, Steenie."

"And have you been trying to retaliate now—now that I am dying for you?"

"No—no—no! Oh, Steenie, try to be a little sorry for me! For once don't think only of yourself. I am not so bad as you believe me. I have meant no harm. I only wanted a few weeks of life before life ends for me—as it will when—when I marry."

"And I am the victim!"

"The victim? Ah, dear, I don't know. The only thing I know in the world is that—you are the only man I ever loved."

She was in his arms and his mouth was on hers.

The little spotted ponies trotted along and Manuolo's discreet back betrayed no consciousness. One or two sentries passed them; but after peering into the carriage, of which Stephen had drawn up the hood, they allowed it to go by unchallenged. The two drew apart when they came under the glare of lights on the Ayala bridge, but after that there were many minutes of darkness and ecstatic oblivion before they clattered into the garden of Thorpe's house.

There was a dim light visible in the distant wing where Angelica was sleeping with the child, separated by two great rooms and a passage from the drawing-room, into which the stairs led. Stephen turned off the one electric light which burned at the front door and they climbed the stairs in darkness, their arms about each other and his mouth seeking hers at every step. The windows and doors separating the drawing-room and balcony were all drawn back, but the moon had set and little light came through them. In the same way they crossed the room and, still clinging together, leaned over the balustrade and looked down into the whispering sea.

It was some time before they found speech. Then, at first, each murmured only the other's name. At last Stephen said hoarsely:

"This is the end of everything, sweetheart—everything that has ever been for either of us—and the beginning. We can't live without each other, can we?—can we?"

"No, no, we cannot! Oh, Steenie, we are so horrid, and I love you so!"

"We are not horrid—at least you are not—and I love you—I love you!"

"What are we going to do, dear?—what can we do?"

"Do? I shall resign tomorrow, and then—oh, darling, I can't think just yet—but we shall *live*—and tomorrow—"

There was the harsh grating of bamboo on the tessellated floor and out of the darkness strode a strong, thick-set figure.

"Alan!" gasped Camilla as he dropped a heavy hand on Stephen's shoulder and jerked him about to face him, at the same time turning on an electric light which hung on a pillar close by.

"I think it quite unlikely that there will be any tomorrow for you, Captain Thorpe." His face was white and he spoke in a low, rough voice. Stephen shook himself free and stepped back. He drew his slight, nervous figure to its full height, nearly a head greater than Alan's.

"Sneak!" he said.

"I am not a sneak—but I would not explain myself to you—liar—coward—thief!" His face was distorted and his teeth set.

Thorpe, the excitable, was quite calm now. He made no answer and only said: "Go to your room, Camilla." She shook her head and gazed as if fascinated at Alan's face, horrible with the rage of a man usually calm.

"I am going to kill you," he said, going a step nearer to Thorpe.

"Very well; I shall be ready to meet you. I suppose even you have someone who can technically be called a friend."

"Friend"—'meet'!" interrupted the other savagely. "Are you talking the jargon of the code? I tell you I am going to kill you here and now!"

"I am still at your service, but you forget that there is a woman present."

"I don't forget it. I'm glad of it. The woman who could help to bring about such a situation can bear to see

the finish. I wouldn't let her go if she wanted to."

"Your mother—"

"Don't dare to name my mother or I shall strangle you before I shoot you!"

"Ah, it's to be shooting, is it? But that makes such a noise!" said Stephen with a drawl which had always exasperated Alan and now additionally maddened him.

"Yes, it's to be shooting—and, by God, I'll spoil that face of yours!"

"Steenie, he's crazy—he's crazy!" gasped Camilla. "You sha'n't be murdered! I'm going to call the patrol—he can't be far!" She started toward the stairs, but Alan sprang forward and seized her arm.

"You are not going to call the patrol and you are going to see this thing out!" He pushed her into a chair and stood between her and Stephen. His powerful figure, in ill-fitting and travel-stained khaki, seemed the very embodiment of brute force. No greater contrast could be imagined to Thorpe, clad in spotless white, leaning, slender and languid, against the balustrade.

Alan had been traveling with troops and still wore a pistol on a leather belt about his waist. He drew it from its holster and turned to face Stephen.

"Oh, I'm going to give you a chance, too," he said. "I believe you are the sort of idiot who goes armed—in case of avenging husbands and lovers, I suppose. Pull it out!"

"Thank you," said Thorpe coldly. "I decline to take any part in a duel in the presence of Miss Arden. I sha'n't interfere with the murder—or execution, if you prefer to call it so."

"Pull it out, you fool!"

Stephen only shook his head and smiled. Alan roughly dragged him about and drew from his hip pocket a small, silver and ivory mounted revolver. He held it up scornfully between thumb and finger.

"It looks like you—just such a one as I can imagine you selecting!" And indeed the contrast between the two arms was as striking as that between the men who bore them. "But it will answer." He thrust Thorpe's pistol

into his hand, and Stephen's fingers closed around it. But he let his arm drop at his side. Alan drew back half a dozen paces, raised his pistol and cocked it. The click seemed to free Camilla from the paralysis which had held her during the past few minutes. She sprang from the chair into which Alan had thrown her and with a sharp "Steenie!" flung herself on Thorpe's breast. Alan lowered his pistol.

"Miss Arden," he said, "I haven't the slightest objection to taking your life also, and I shall do so unless you move. But your attitude prevents Captain Thorpe from defending himself."

Thorpe dropped his revolver on the floor and threw his arms about her.

"Darling—darlingest—he means it!" he said. "It's all over—this is good-bye."

He laid his cheek for a moment on hers and then kissed her long on the mouth. While he did so Alan again raised his pistol, and Thorpe had only time to fling Camilla from him when a shot rang out—only one.

When Angelica, in her night-robe, her eyes just startled from sleep, came upon the scene Camilla was crouched on the floor, with Steenie's dead and disfigured face pressed against her breast. Alan's empty hands hung at his sides and his voice was low and broken as he said:

"He stole my mother and then my wife—and I killed him!"



ESPÉRANCE

La Muse

MAINTENANT que la lampe est pâle et va mourir
 Et qu'une ombre indécise erre autour de ce livre
 Où tes regards voilés peuvent à peine suivre
 Les signes que la nuit croissante vient couvrir,
 Poète, rêve un peu . . . laisse un moment revivre
 Les images que tu croyais le plus cherir
 Et vois comme le cœur très vite se délivre
 Des meilleurs souvenirs dont il aimait souffrir!
 Et les voyant déjà fantômes d'une autre heure
 Celles dont le baiser devait être éternel,
 Encore et sans regret charme-toi de ce leurre . . .
 Car c'est un doux moment d'évoquer l'irréel
 Que celui de la solitude taciturne,
 Quand la lampe s'éteint en un reflet nocturne . . .

Le Poète

Oui, tout m'a fui, tout m'a menti, rien n'est resté
 Des charmes que mon cœur donnait aux apparences
 Et dès l'instant que j'ai touché la volupté
 Son baiser ne m'a rien appris que de souffrances!
 Mais c'est alors que j'ai connu la vérité
 Et que l'amour rayonne en pures espérances
 Dans les pleurs où le ciel fait luire sa clarté,
 Comme dans la rosée aux vives transparences!
 Oui, tout meurt mais non pas l'amour dont l'âme vit,
 Et si même la terre est mauvaise à ses rêves
 Qu'importe!—elle a son cher secret qui la ravit!
 Qu'importe que le temps et ses minutes brèves
 Aillent dans le passé noyer leur vanité,
 S'il nous reste la vie et l'Immortalité.

VICOMTE JACQUES DE BEAUFORT.

THE MAXIMS OF METHUSELAH

BEING THE ADVICE GIVEN BY THE PATRIARCH IN HIS NINE HUNDRED, SIXTY
AND NINTH YEAR, TO HIS GREAT-GRANDSON SHEM

By Gelett Burgess

THE maxims of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, for the guidance of his son's son's son, Shem, at his coming of age:

2 To know wisdom and instruction concerning women; to perceive the words of knowledge whereby the damsels of his choice may be judged; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man discretion in his loves.

3 ¶My son, so live that when she seeth thy photograph, *she may smile* and think untellable thoughts.

4 Praise not a woman for what she hath, but for what she hath *not*, and thy reward shall be exceeding great;

5 A witty woman for her beauty, and a comely damsel for her intellect; a wise woman for her jests, and a frivolous maid for her *literary criticism*;

6 A pianist for her cookery and a housewife for her mathematics; so shalt thou praise them;

7 But the *mother of one babe* shall be flattered through her child alone, for there the straight way lieth.

8 ¶Lo, wickedness weareth the look of innocence, and the baby stare gazeth from the froward woman's eyes. She hungereth after the callow youth; she studieth the ways of the virgin, and walketh humbly;

9 She pretendeth to be *shocked*, she casteth down her eyes: she delighteth to be instructed.

10 She laugheth in her sleeve, she amuseth herself with the young man's innocence; and when he is gone, she

telleth his follies to *her friends*, she laugheth in glee thereat.

11 ¶Beware thou of a woman who signeth not her name to her letters; she will bear watching, she hath a *past*.

12 But she who dealeth in ciphers and symbols, who hath her secret name for this and for that, who calleth not a spade a spade, so that none but thee only may understand her, seek her and woo her, for she hath cunning; observe her ways and be wise.

13 Knowest thou a maiden who sheweth all her letters to her mother? Cultivate her, and she shall soon send thee words *as of fire*. Even as the blower on the fireplace hideth the flames, so shall she break forth when her parents' scrutiny be *removed*.

14 ¶If thou suspectest thy love, it is better to leave her than to doubt; but to believe and to doubt also, it is a bitter torment.

15 In my youth I knew a maiden of the Land of Nod, and I loved her. And my friends came unto me and said: Lo, she is a devil, cast thou her off. But I made answer, saying: Verily, I know well that she is *either* angel or devil, for in no other wise could she delight my soul; but it is *better* to think her an angel while I may; yea, it is more *affording*.

16 ¶She who leaveth her hair *in the comb* shall be cast out into utter darkness.

17 Count no matron happy till she hath passed thirty and *hath not waxed*

fat; for then do her sisters torment her, saying: In *this* gown thou needest have no fear, for it becometh thee; but *wear not* horizontal stripes, for thy hip increaseth.

18 ¶Many are the speeches of the conventional women, aye, in my books are they all inscribed, and I know well how to expect them, and am not disappointed;

19 She sayeth: Lo, if thou hadst come *yesterday*, then we had a good dinner, and *last week* was mine house in perfect order.

20 She sayeth: Lo, it is passing strange that my child behaveth not before company; *when we are alone*, then will he speak his piece.

21 Two things she sayeth on parting; yea, three speeches are inevitable when she leaveth thine house. Lo, I have had *such* a charming time, and, it is so *good* of you to have asked me; and, now *do* come and see us.

22 ¶Women know well of women's ways, for if a man love, he telleth much, aye, he enlighteneth her, concerning his previous loves; but no man knoweth how another man maketh love, for this women tell not.

23 Though a woman be as honest as a child before company, yet will she lie to *the man she loveth*, and to him only.

24 My son, if a woman confesseth that she love thee, and thou lovest her not, forsake her not in her anguish, make her to laugh; let thy conduct be merry.

25 Yet when she sayeth: I have repented of my folly, forget thy pride and be glad; remind her not of her words, let thy mouth be shut upon her weakness aforetime.

26 ¶Some women are captured by storm, and some taken by siege: yet if there be not a traitor in her heart that shall deliver up the garrison, *thou shalt not prevail over her*.

27 I say unto thee, verily, not *every* woman who looketh like a maiden going to a tea is a typewriter; for some are maidens going to a tea.

28 If, when thou callest, she asketh thee concerning thy goings-in and thy

comings-out and what thou doest, take heed, for she thinketh of other things; she prepareth herself to *work thee*.

29 ¶Lo, I have watched the rivalry of maidens at the summer hotel, yea, at the seashore have I regarded their strife. Yet could I not judge a damsel's popularity by the flowers she received, for verily, it is oft her *mother* who sendeth them, and *the old man* footeth the bills.

30 ¶Son, be not deceived by the undemonstrative, for a woman of *ice* oft desireth to be wooed with ardor, and she who standeth apart *hath her own opinion* of the languid lover.

31 Propose not unto a woman when she hath gotten a new frock, nor when she is puffed up with victories; when she reigneth and rejoiceth in her hour of triumph *come not nigh unto her*, for thou shalt not prevail over her; but if she be ill or a-weary, when she is cast down in spirit and needeth a comforter, then *be thou ready* and make thy suit.

32 After she hath walked far and resteth; while the storm gathereth and the thunders are loosed in the heavens; while she listeneth to fair music; when the wine cup is half-emptied: then shalt thou have thy way with her.

33 And a wedding in haste is worth two at leisure.

34 If she dresseth her hair in a new fashion, lo, some one hath wondrous influence over her, and if he shaveth his beard, *there is a reason*.

35 ¶As fascinating as a *loose tooth* is a secret to a young maid; for she knoweth not whether to spit it out or to keep it safe. Yet she can in no wise forget it.

36 Catnip pleaseth the kitten, and the reading of her palm rejoiceth the damsel alway. Blessed is he who clotheth a woman's vanity with *pleasant prophecies*;

37 He sayeth: lo, thou art indeed *sensitive*; thou art much *misunderstood*. Thy friends comprehend thee not, for thou art too *subtile* for them. And within four years thou shalt travel.

38 For a woman goeth to the sorcerer and the fortune-teller, and she returneth with a marvel alway. Yea, though she believeth not, *yet doth she believe*, and her lips are full of wonders.

39 Behold, he who spilleth ice-cream upon a front breadth shall be forgiven, but whoso mentioneth her

last night's indiscretion shall be despised.

40 Better are *two right-hand gloves* together, than a man in the moonlight with the wrong woman; and for a maiden to be alone by the seashore is as a hat without a hatpin; it breedeth wild thoughts.



DREAM-SHIPS

DREAM-SHIPS, dream-ships, coming up out of the sea,
Laden with mystical freight are ye?

I have surfeit of dreams already—
Bring me no more from the sea.

Dream-ships, dream-ships, coming up out of the sea,
Laden with Orient pearls are ye?

I have burden of tears already—
Bring me no more from the sea.

Dream-ships, dream-ships, coming up out of the sea,
Draped with purple of Tyre are ye?

I have garments of woe already—
Bring me no more from the sea.

Dream-ships, dream-ships, coming up out of the sea,
Your freight is the word you bear to me.

And my songs are finished already—
Bring me no more from the sea.

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH WELLS.



THE DANGER

BLACK—I hear that old Corker is dangerously ill with the gout.

WHITE—I didn't know gout was dangerous.

BLACK—It isn't, but Corker is.



AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE

FRIEND—Cheer up. A woman's no means yes.

THE LOVER—But it was such a positive negative.

PAGANISM

SOVEREIGN summer, when the season ripens for your gentle reign,
 When the sensuous June is pulsing unintelligible pain;
 Emerald evenings, crimson mornings, earth and wood and sky and wave,
 Take and make me what I first was, centuries agone—your slave!

Let me lie upon the hillside where the ancient white oaks speak
 With the keen, clean air of morning, with the grass against my cheek,
 Where the waters in the distance through a thousand eddies run
 And the whole glad world is paying tribute to our lord the sun.

Make me man as first you knew him when his soul was at its prime,
 Sovereign summer, as he sought you in the first sweet summertime;
 Warm my heart with all your sunshine; flood my breast with all your pain,
 All your gladness, all your sorrow—take me to your arms again!

Plunge me, atom then for atom, ere the August yellows fade,
 Back to that remembered morrow when the world was newly made;
 Fill me, thrill me with your spirit, mad desire and glad despair,
 Till the elemental being claim again the freer air!

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



GOOD WORK

“**I** HEAR that the Sunday-school superintendent has been doing some great missionary work.”
 “You don’t say so!”
 “Yes; he has converted a lot of the church funds to his own use.”



TACT

SHE—James, you were half an hour trying to find the keyhole last night.
 HE—Well, my dear, you know how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

THE INSIDE STORY OF IT

By Rebecca Harding Davis

MY readers who are past middle age will remember the period in the last century when Colonel Philip Talbot, Senator from New York, was the popular candidate for the Presidency. He was elected Governor of New York, the intention being that that office should serve as a stepping-stone to the nomination for President a few months later.

Now, it was the mass of the people who wanted to put Talbot into the White House. The bosses of his party looked askance at him. "Phil's unsafe," they said; "he balks at rein and spur. The little man wants to go it alone."

However, his popularity was too strong a factor to be ignored. Almost against their will, they ran him through the polls in New York.

The evening of his election, as the Washington newspapers announced, "Colonel Talbot entertained at dinner the members of the Cabinet and the diplomatic corps in his palatial mansion on X avenue. The dinner was followed by a ball, unequaled in the Capital for many years in magnificence and cost."

The drill-majors of the party from every State were at this ball, trying to buttonhole the colonel and to drive a bargain as to the wages he would pay for their help in the coming struggle.

Phil, always an eager, cordial host, had a bit of banter and an intimate word for every man of them. It never occurred to him that they wanted wages. If he had to go into this Presidential fight these good fellows would be his comrades, his backers! Hence, each man went away

feeling that he was "old Phil's" personal friend. Instead of the post-office at Dyck's Crossing, which he meant to ask for, a place in the Cabinet, eh?

Laidley, the huge Congressman from Texas, loomed on the crowd in one room and another until he found Mrs. Talbot, where she stood receiving some belated guests. He dropped into a seat behind her.

"Here's the one thing in Washington," he said loudly, to the other men near, "that stays the same every day. This little lady never buzzes about. Come when you like, here she is, at home, in the same white frock, and her hair in the same yellow puffs. The other women are more rabid politicians than the men. Oh, I could tell you things! Always an axe for you to grind — every darned one of them. But Mrs. Talbot—why, she doesn't know what party Phil belongs to—do you, now?"

The men laughed. She looked up at him. Her face was small and insignificant, and her blue eyes were faded. But there were strange meanings in them when they rested on his.

"God bless my soul!" muttered the Texan, shuffling uncomfortably. Could she—? She had seen him so seldom! Perhaps Talbot was unsympathetic? These politicians were hard, tough men.

He rose and left the room hastily. Poor thing! Poor, ugly little thing! At his age, too! What would Laura say when he told her? But he never would tell her. He would keep the little woman's miserable secret.

Just then he ran across Freyer, the

leader of the other party in the House, and, as they walked on together, he spoke of the thing uppermost in his mind.

"Talbot's wife? What do I think of her? Phil took me in one afternoon. Her rooms are always crowded, and she sits and knits some white fluffy stuff—and never talks to but one man at a time. I watched her knit, knit, and smile—smile, and glance furtively about, and I got up and left, double-quick. I know when I'm near a bigger thing than myself! Why, that woman could turn Jem Freyer inside out as she would her glove!"

"She is essentially weak and feminine, in my opinion," said the Texan, with dignity.

Freyer laughed. "Why, Joe, all Talbot's success has come through that soft-whispering mite of a woman. He is nothing but a lazy, warm-hearted boy. Brilliant and magnetic—yes. But it was she who pushed and coaxed and whipped him on. She'll shove him into the Presidency yet—unless somebody pulls the check rein." He stopped with a meaning laugh.

"You see," he went on after a minute, "she's worked him for thirty years. She found him, a poor carpenter in a Virginia village. She saw the stuff that was in him, and married him—to use it. She forced him to study law, to move North, to go into politics, to speculate—to make money—honestly, if possible—if not—" He waved his hand and nodded. "She means to be the boss in the White House yonder, to rank with queens—to marry her daughter to a duke or billionaire. It would be a pity, too, to sell that girl to the highest bidder. She's a genuine little thing, a bit of the same stuff as her father."

"She doesn't look now as if she were waiting for the duke," Laidley said, laughing. They had stopped at the ballroom door. Miss Talbot and her partner stood near it. "Who is that young six-footer with her?"

"I don't know," Freyer said; "he's a newcomer. Not in politics, I'll wager. He has a whiff of the country

about him, eh? She knows all about him, you bet! I've never seen her look like that before."

Freyer stood watching her, whistling under his breath, and tugging at his red mustache. He had a keen scent for a wholesome love affair. Presently he shook his head. "The old woman will never tolerate that!" he said at last. "There'll be a fine game soon. If the little girl is getting the worst of it, I may take a hand myself. Come, let's have some supper."

"Let us get out of this crowd," the six-footer was saying to Miss Talbot. He hurried her through the halls to a deserted little room. Molly laughed to herself. She thought, like Freyer, that there was a whiff of the country about Hugh Payne. The evening dress, the courtly manner, were only a sort of masquerade; the man below was big, simple, direct, like one used to living alone with the hills and woods and going straight to the heart of things.

"Do you know," he said, "how long it is since we stood by this fire—just here? Four years, Molly, four years to a day. My God, how they have crept by! There were days when I was so sick for one sight of your face, for one sound of your voice, that I nearly gave it up and came creeping back to you. But I fought it out. Did you miss me? Did you ever miss me once?"

"Yes, I missed you, Hugh," she whispered. She was a plump, methodic little girl with smooth brown hair and dark eyes, out of which always looked a calm, reasonable soul. But now some strange, live thing looked out of them at him that was not calm nor reasonable.

"When your mother sent you away that day," he went on, "she came up to me just here, and looked me over. Then she said—"

"Oh, why do you bring up what she said? What's the use, Hugh?"

"I must. You never knew why I went away. She used plain English enough. She said: 'What right have you to ask for my child? You have neither position nor wealth nor brains.'

You have done nothing in the world. She is but a child. She has seen no other men. If you are an honorable gentleman you will go away for four years. Leave her alone, bring no influence to bear upon her. Let her know something of life. Then we shall see whether she will persist in this school-girl fancy.'

"She put it brutally, but there was truth in what she said. I obeyed her. I never saw you again. I went back to the old farm in Kentucky. I have kept away from you for four years."

"What did you do there, Hugh?" whispered Molly. "I used to wonder every day what you were doing."

"I justified your mother's opinion of me," he said with a bitter laugh. "I set out to win fame and distinction for you. I tried the law, but I 'hadn't the legal brain,' they said. I went into politics and was beaten. I'm afraid I'm not a brainy man, Molly. Farming is the only thing I'm fit for. I have made a big success in that. I've a house ready for you. It's not a palace like this. But it's home——"

His voice dropped into a whisper. Molly had been waiting four years to hear these very words. Why would these detestable strangers crowd into the room at the moment and silence him?

They came, innocently enough, to take leave of her. Among them was Mr. Freyer, who eyed Hugh Payne sharply; then going back to the ballroom, he waited his chance and said to Mrs. Talbot:

"Handsome young giant, your friend Payne, who is with Miss Talbot! He looks as David might after he had killed Goliath—in modern clothes. Whatever he does, I'll bet he comes out a winner!"

Mrs. Talbot smiled vaguely. She never spoke when smiles or vague glances would suffice. But her heart gave a sickening throb. Could it be that horse-breeder Payne had turned up again?

A couple of hours later the great house was dark and silent, except in

the colonel's dressing-room. Talbot had many whims which had hardened into habits. One was to end every day with a bowl of hot milk and a bit of pilot bread, while he gossiped with Molly. He had kept himself awake at many a state banquet by the thought of this *bonne bouche* waiting for him. Molly, in a wrapper, lounged on an easy-chair beside him, brushing her hair. Mrs. Talbot, still in her ball dress, sat erect by a lamp in the chamber beyond, reading the evening lesson from her prayer-book. No human being had ever seen her lounge or brush her hair.

"Molly, I've an idea!" cried the colonel. "Let's be off to the island by the six o'clock train in the morning and have a week's fishing!"

"Tomorrow?" Molly said thoughtfully. The colonel often bolted from work to the woods and always took her with him. "You can't do it, daddy," she said. "The committee will be here in the morning to announce your election to you and hundreds of politicians to lay plans for the big campaign. You can't run away like that."

"I can throw up the whole business!" cried Talbot, like an angry boy. "I never wanted to be Governor of New York nor President of the United States. I did think the campaign would be fun—to head an army of your comrades and friends. I was told a thousand times I had the hearts of the people. What do they care for me? *Me!* It's office they want! I've been in that seething mass downstairs for hours—each man trying to sell himself for some miserable little post. You should have seen their greedy eyes! It made me positively sick. I'll cut the whole business!" he added, casting a guilty glance, as he raged, into the other room.

The little woman put a mark in her prayer-book, shut it, and came to the door. "It would be a pity you should run away tomorrow, Philip," she said quietly. "Two delegations from Indiana came today to arrange operations for the Presidential campaign.

Northern Indiana is lukewarm, you know. New York is secure for you now. If you can gain Indiana your election is sure. I wouldn't insult the State just now, if I were you."

"I tell you, I'm stifling," cried the little man. "The bargain and sale—the moral filth of it all!"

"These telegrams," she went on gently, taking up a sheaf of yellow papers from her desk, "came to you tonight from every city in the country. Mass meetings are called celebrating your victory—you are greeted as the coming President. The eyes of the whole country will be on you tomorrow, and you will have to run to hide on Parmor's Island!"

"Yes. You can't go. You're too hard on mother, daddy," interrupted Molly. "How long has she worked to gain you this chance? It has been her life."

"It's not my life, then!" said Talbot. "I want to be myself—not a party puppet. I want time to be alone to go into the woods, to read a book. That's the kind of thing I was born for. There are days when I must have it or I'd go mad."

His wife looked at him steadily, then she came into the room. "Let us settle this thing now, and for always," she said gently.

Molly stood up with a little gasp of admiration. Her mother was not exactly a human being, perhaps, but she was a miraculous manufacture. She was made up of the best. Even her plain white gown was of priceless lace, and the string of beads, half hidden on her neck, was of pearls famous on two continents. The little white wisp of a woman with her yellow hair and pale eyes had neither great beauty nor intellect, but she had that compelling power, call it magnetism or hypnotism, or what you will, which makes its possessor a ruler of men.

"There is no need of talking about it," she said to Philip. "You know what I have tried to do for you for thirty years." She came close to him. The thin little body swayed a trifle. Molly caught her in her arms.

She saw the big drops of sweat come out on her mother's upper lip. "It has gone on for thirty years, and now when success is sure, you balk me! I'm—I'm tired!"

"Mother!" cried the girl. "He knows! He doesn't mean to balk you! You've been our good angel, dear mother!"

Colonel Talbot's eyes twinkled. He took his wife in his arms and placed her in a chair. "I will not oppose you, Priscilla. Have it your own way for the rest of your life," he said gravely.

"That won't be long," sobbed Molly, stroking Mrs. Talbot's hands, with white face and trembling lips. She never had seen her mother in this condition of nervous collapse. "We'll give our lives to nursing you," the dull-witted girl cried passionately.

"I had planned your life, too," whispered Mrs. Talbot, holding Molly's plump hand in her bony, cold fingers. All that was genuine in her was in the touch. She loved Molly even better than herself. "No girl in the country ever stood where I meant to place you. But you choose a Kentucky stock farm!"

Molly did not speak for some time. Then she said slowly:

"I promise you I will not marry Hugh Payne against your will, mother."

"He is a man that—"

"I have promised. That is enough," said Molly quickly. "We will never speak of him again."

Colonel Talbot carried his wife to her chamber. When he came back he took Molly in his arms. "You have ruined your life, child!" he said.

"Mother is ill—she may be dying! I can't think of myself," she sobbed.

Philip lifted his gray eyebrows doubtfully. He had known Priscilla many years.

"I cannot see Hugh again. You will explain to him, daddy. You'll be kind to him?" she cried, clinging to his neck.

A month later the big Texan met Freyer one day in the rotunda.

"Well, what d'ye think of the Talbot boom now?" he shouted.

Freyer nodded. "Bigger than I expected."

"Big? Why, it's sweeping the country like a prairie fire."

"Prairie fires soon burn out, if they're treated right," said Freyer.

"How are you goin' to treat this one, hey? I tell you, Freyer, you've nobody to match Talbot."

Freyer grunted by way of answer. "There goes that fellow Payne," he said. "What's he doing here still? Waiting on Miss Molly?"

"No. She's turned him down. They say he watches for hours on the street just to see her drive past."

Freyer soon shook the Texan off. "She never turned him down," he said to himself. "The girl begins to look pale and ghastly. That old woman's at work."

He walked down the street, pulling his red mustache. The Talbot boom had amazed him and the other leaders of his party. It was a fact, as Laidley claimed, that they had nobody who could make a fight against Phil.

"The old woman's played a good game!" he said, nodding. "And that boy and girl are bein' done to death by it. It's time I took a hand." He stopped and glanced around. "It's a Tuesday. Tuesday's my lucky day. I guess I'll play my game right off."

An hour later, Freyer, in immaculate afternoon garb, sent up his card to Mrs. Talbot with a request for a private audience.

Her drawing-room, as usual, was full of men. It was the meeting ground of the party leaders. Now, Freyer was the leader of the opposition. She turned his card over thoughtfully once or twice. He was not a man for small manœuvres. This visit meant important business.

She directed the servant to take him to the library and a moment later followed, a noiseless little figure, soft, gauzy robes like gray mist clinging to her.

Freyer bowed low as she came in.

When she spoke he bowed again, but could say nothing for the moment. He was surprised to find himself so ill at ease. Now that he had begun it he felt how brutal was the business he had taken in hand. She was only a woman, after all. He looked at her as a butcher does at the helpless sheep into which he is going to stick his knife.

"Come you in peace or come you in war?" she said, smiling gaily.

"In war, without a doubt," he replied grimly.

Still smiling, she motioned him toward a chair.

"No, I'll not sit down in your house, Mrs. Talbot. It wouldn't be the clean thing to do, considering my business here."

"What is your business?"

He looked into her eyes a minute. Yes, she was strong enough to bear the blow. It had to be given, to save the election, to save little Molly.

"I came to you instead of to Colonel Talbot, because you could understand my errand better. You will grasp the situation and act at once. He would have raged and—never acted."

"What is your business?" she repeated.

"This—I shall be quite frank. I represent my party. We mean to gain the next election. If Colonel Talbot runs we shall not do it. He is stronger than any man we can put up."

Her face flushed with triumph.

"Yes. And then—?"

"He must not run."

"How will you prevent it?"

"In this way." He drew from his pocket a dingy paper.

"As soon," he said, with slow distinctness, "as a man is offered to the public as a candidate for that office every incident of his past life is dragged out—every petty disgrace or crime. One man was forced to retire because he had stolen ten dollars when he was a school-boy; another, because he had legitimatized a mulatto child—you are ill, Mrs. Talbot? I will go away—I will talk to Phil—"

"No. Go on. What have you there?"

He laid the paper on the table. "This is the certificate of the marriage of John Forsyth and Priscilla Allen on July thirteenth, eighteen-fifty.

"You were Priscilla Allen. John Forsyth is living now—a rum-soaked hobo, but as such he can claim his wife. You never have been divorced from him."

God! How old and weak she was! Her lips shrank back from her teeth. For a moment it was a death's head staring at him. She touched the paper.

"It is a lie."

"No. You know that it is true. Forsyth can be produced at once." His voice failed him. He stopped for a minute. "I have reason to believe that Talbot never has known anything of this matter," he said, looking away from her.

"He does not," she gasped. "He is not to blame. It was I—"

"And for God's sake," burst out Freyer, "why were you such a fool?"

"He thought me a young girl. He never would have taken Forsyth's cast-off wife. I always meant to tell him some day, but—" She steadied herself for a moment. "It will do Phil no harm if you make this known," she said. "It was I who did it."

"You know," said Freyer roughly, "that the American people never will tolerate in the White House a man whose life has been openly immoral. On the day this paper is made public you know that Talbot's chance of election is over forever. I propose to publish it on next Wednesday throughout the United States. If you would stop me, let Colonel Talbot on Tuesday issue a positive refusal to accept the candidacy under any conditions. And, as soon as you announce the engagement of your daughter to Hugh Payne, I will burn this paper and no human being shall ever know of its contents."

She turned her back and was silent a long time.

At last she said. "How can I be sure that you will keep your word?"

"I don't know," said Freyer simply. "I will keep it. I'm an honorable man, generally. This is a damned mean business I'm at now. But I had to save my party and—that girl." He gathered up his papers. "I'll go now."

Her gown was not grayer than her skin, and her teeth still showed strangely, like those of a corpse. But she smiled and bowed as he went out.

He drew a long breath outside. "What a fighter!" he gasped. "The staying power of her! What a pity she's not a man!"

Mr. Laidley was not returned to Congress next term and he took his wife abroad for two years. He met Freyer on the steamer coming home, and they had time to talk over things.

"You never could have put your man into the White House," Laidley said one day, "if Talbot had not gone back on us."

"No."

"I never could understand that move of Phil's. To throw up the fight before it began, when success was sure. It beat me!"

"It was said," Freyer replied after a moment, "that Talbot had organic trouble of the heart and that his physicians warned him that the excitement of a campaign would mean death to him."

"Very likely!" Laidley shook his head gloomily. "Excitable little fellow! I heard that when his wife died he gave up politics altogether and went down to live on the farm in Kentucky with his daughter and son-in-law."

"Yes, he is there."

"Mrs. Talbot died suddenly, soon after he declined the nomination—so the papers said."

Freyer nodded. The men were leaning over the rail, watching the dark water sweep by. Laidley glanced curiously at his companion and lowered his voice.

"Freyer, d'ye know, there were queer whispers in Paris about that woman's death? It was hinted she was unhappy with Phil—suicide—chloral, eh?"

"Nonsense!" said Freyer loudly. "Mrs. Talbot died of spinal meningitis. She wasn't the kind to run away because she was beaten!" He struck a match, but Laidley noticed that his

hand shook, as he held it to his cigar.

"She was a great fighter," he said hoarsely. "Sometimes I am sorry that she was beaten!"



A FAREWELL

SO now you leave me, turn away your face,
And from my threshold evermore depart!
Light-footed Love, I will not pray you stay,
Like one forlorn of heart!

Because I am bereft of your sweet eyes,
You think that I shall yield me to despair?
Here Duty waits me, smiling as you smiled,
Believe me, and as fair!

I played with you—that's all—a summer's day,
Was happy and am happy as you go.
You think there are no other charms than yours
To set one's heart aglow?

A smile—a dream—you lightly go your way,
I mine, to other fortunes that shall be.
So, playmate, fare you well! Come, Duty—*Love!*
Turn once, and look on me!

MARGARET JOHNSON.



THE HOME-COMING OF BENHAM

MRS. BENHAM—Have you anything to say for yourself?
BENHAM—Yes.

"Well, what is it?"

"If I said it I wouldn't have it to say, would I?"



BRIGGS—Have you had any accident with your auto?
GRIGGS—Yes. I succeeded in running it a whole day.

ONE KISS

ONE kiss, and the birds are singing,
 And life is a long, long bliss;
 Blossom and sun are telling
 The tender worth of a kiss.

One kiss, and my soul awakens,
 Wakens to throb and glow
 With the noblest, holiest pleasure
 That ever a soul may know.

One kiss, and the earth has vanished,
 The glories of heaven unclose
 Their splendors thrilling and soothing,
 Soothing to love's repose.

One kiss, and all the cosmos
 Melts to a flaming fire—
 Thou art that flame so living
 The flame of my desire.

One kiss, and our beings mingle,
 Mingle and grow as one,
 For love's own kiss has joined us—
 Souls that were two are one.

CARLTON STUART.



HIS GREATEST FEAR

“MY child, Lord Topnotch seems very fond of you.”
 “Yes. He said last night that he must speak to papa quick, as his
 weakness for me might cripple his business instincts.”



GOING ON FOREVER

FIRST PATIENT—What makes you think my trouble is incurable?
 SECOND PATIENT—I heard that you had a permanent income.

THE MAJOR AND I

By Tom Masson

THE major and I had always been good friends. For one thing, we both liked the same kind of a cigar.

"A cigar," said the major, "should be neither too good nor too bad. If a man gets into the habit of smoking bad cigars, not only is he a continued source of regret to his friends, but, graver still, he experiences a moral deterioration that no amount of pious influence can offset. If his cigars are too good, on the other hand, he is obliged to live up to them. I began once to smoke a fifty-cent cigar a day—only one. At first it was a difficult financial adjustment. Then my mind got used to it—so used to it that I began to smoke two—then three. For some time afterward I was puzzled to know why I never seemed to have any cash in hand, until it dawned upon me that I was making a steady glow of my bank account."

At the time I met the major we were both on the same twenty-cent brand, and this being enough to insure our confidence in each other, we became friends, and it was not long after this when by mutual consent we arranged to have our apartments next to each other.

This arrangement was a great success. Each one of us rubbed away the loneliness of the other, and we did it without any irritating consequences. There were moments of reminiscence, of reverie, when I saw that the major must not be disturbed. He divined the same of me. During these intervals we protected each other from the outside world. And during those other intervals, when we felt the need of com-

panionship, it seemed as if I had just what the major needed and the major had just what I needed.

I was somewhat older than the major. He was fifty and I was thirty, but age is never fully expressed in years. It is in feeling. I have never been able to be sure about the exact time when I caught up with the major, but I think it must have been when I was twenty and he forty. I feel sure that, if we had met then, we should not have agreed. We should have been too much alike.

At present, however, there was enough difference between us to insure a fortunate combination. The major was a perfect child about business matters, while I had a keen sense of those important details. He never thought of doing anything without consulting me. On the other hand, his sense of true human relationship was very much finer than mine. He taught me the art of dealing with my fellow-men. He taught me, or at least made me a student of, that rare art of gentle courtesy which in these days we seem to lack; and I learned from him that amid the wear and tear of modern life it is still possible to retain one's simplicity of character.

One day the major said to me:

"My friend, we must go to the sea-shore. We need the change. It will do us both good."

So I made all the necessary arrangements, and together we went. We selected a quiet spot on the Maine coast. Alas! since then I have learned this axiom: that there is no quiet spot anywhere upon the face of the earth that does not contain at least one widow.

I well remember the day she burst upon us in all the subdued splendor of her pony-cart. The ponies were black, the harness was black, the widow's clothes were black. But in strong contrast to her surroundings was the shining face of the widow.

I looked into the major's eyes and he looked into mine. I must confess that I saw something that startled me. I know now that if there is such a thing as love at first sight for one, it holds equally good for two. In an instant I realized that the major and I were in love—and with the same woman.

The next day we met her. Some change in the outgoing and incoming guests put us at a new table. There she was, radiant, demure, smiling. In the afternoon we had a three-cornered conversation at the shady end of the piazza.

Did the widow object to cigars? Never! She doted upon them. So between us the major and I consumed eighty cents' worth of them.

As we made our toilet before dinner, the major was more silent than usual. So indeed was I. It seemed to me that I was being drawn into a vortex from which there was no escape. The widow's eyes haunted me. An atmosphere of gentle, pathetic experience surrounded her, and through it she seemed transfigured into an angel. I was fearful lest she might prefer the major to me, and fearful lest she shouldn't. Indeed, so much I admired and esteemed my friend that I knew she would be lowered in my opinion should she prefer me. On the other hand, how could I now live without her? It was indeed a problem.

Finally the major spoke, laying his hands upon my shoulders in the old familiar manner when he was much moved. There were tears in his eyes. For this kindly old soul, who had fought undaunted through a score of battles, was as sentimental as a child.

"My boy," he said, "that widow has captured me. The moment I saw her I realized that all was lost. And yet as I look into your face I perceive that all is not right with you. Let

us be men. Let us meet this issue together. Speak, my boy!"

I also was much moved. "Major," I said, "you have read my secret aright. I, too, am heels over head in love with the widow. Do you blame me?"

It was a trying moment. Both of us realized instinctively what it meant. We had both in a very large sense become necessary to each other. I could not conceive of life without the major—and the widow. And I saw too plainly that he was thinking of the same thing—he could not conceive of life without me—and the widow.

"My boy," said the major at last, "I have a plan. Of course, I don't blame you. You could not have been the friend to me that you are if you had not done the same thing. The mere fact that we have fallen in love with the same woman only proves that we have not been mistaken in each other."

"What is your plan?" I asked, with breathless anxiety.

"It is this. We must divide the widow up. You have her one day, and I the next. Between friends such as we are, it is the only way. We'll draw lots for the first choice, and after that may the best man win!"

"It was just what I knew you would do!" I exclaimed, embracing him. Our glasses touched.

"Major," I said solemnly, "I drink to your success!" And the major's voice quivered as he replied:

"And I, my boy—to yours!"

The major won the toss, and the next morning I bade him farewell for the day and evening.

Never have I passed a more miserable time. Faithful to my promise I kept in the background, but in the distance I caught glimpses of the widow and the major, and it was quite evident to me that he was losing no time. But all things have an end, and the hour came for us to meet again.

There was a new light in the major's eyes. "My boy," he said solemnly,

"I will keep my promise. Tomorrow is yours."

The next day I arose bright and early, while the major kept to his room.

I realized that I must do my best or the major never would forgive me. Besides, once within the widow's spell I could not help myself. With years and endurance on my side, why should I not win? I consoled myself with the thought that if I did the major could live with us.

Shall I ever forget that day? It stands out in my memory like a ray of sunshine in a world of gloom. And as it wore on I felt that the widow and I were drawing nearer to each other all the time. And then at ten o'clock

that evening in the gloomiest corner of the piazza—I won her.

It was some two hours later that I went up to the major. He was waiting for me, puffing one of our cigars in deep reverie. He rose with his old affectionate manner to greet me. It was hard—harder than I ever dreamed. But I saw the best way was to tell the truth—after all, we were both men.

"Major," I said solemnly, "it's all over. The widow has accepted me."

"When?" said the major.

"Tonight—an hour ago."

The major smiled a peculiar smile I had never seen before.

"That's nothing, my boy," he said drily; "she did the same thing to me—last night."



"YOURS TILL DEATH"

NAY, dear, such brief protesting hath no grace
Of me! And since for us love's lightest breath
Is contraband, turn swift away thy face;
Give life to other women, but be mine in death!

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI.



ALARMING THOUGHT

WIFE—Don't you think we'd better ask those young people to dinner? You know they are sweet on each other.

HUSBAND—I wouldn't think of such a thing. Why, we'll get so well acquainted with them that we'll have to give them a wedding present.



I"HEAR there are American colonies in London and Paris."
"That's nothing. I believe there's one in New York."

THE HENCHMAN

DEATH came close to the bed—
 Silent, commanding, grim.
 The poet turned, in his pain,
 And smiled at him.

“You drank life deep,” said Death,
 “And now will you taste of me?
 For I hold the deeper cup
 Of Eternity.

“Revel, and love, and pain—
 You have suffered and sung them all!
 Your fame is where millions pass,
 Where shy birds call.

“Strong men laugh with your mirth,
 And women weep, at your whim;
 But I”—(and the mirthless one
 Bent over him)—

“But I, 'twixt breath and breath,
 Can rob you of all,” he said;
 And he laid his heavy hand
 On the quiet bed.

The lights were shaded and low.
 A strange mist swam in the room,
 And the man could see Death's eyes
 Haunting the gloom.

He said, “I know you, my friend—
 God's henchman, and nothing more!
 If He has sent you, why, then
 Open the door!”

THEODORE ROBERTS.



A QUESTION OF HONOR

S LIMSON—What was the trouble between you and the little boy next door?
 WILLIE—He said he was a worse boy than I was.

THE STAGE AT THE PRESENT MOMENT

By David Belasco

I WISH that it were in my power to write as enthusiastically of the American stage as I should like to do, but it would take an optimist indeed, and a base prevaricator at that, to throw a roseate hue over the theatrical situation in America as it stands at the present time.

No better illustration of the despondent situation of the stage today could be given than the state of mingled panic and pandemonium which actors and managers alike are in at the present time—the eve of a new season which contains a Presidential election, a period which has always proved disastrous to theatricals. The managers, with ten theatres on their hands where they had one formerly, are panic-stricken at the paucity of attractions, and the actors who formerly were accustomed to sign their contracts early in June for the new season find themselves at large in shoals, with little prospect of any engagement until after the Presidential contest is over and the country has settled down again to the even tenor of its theatre-going way. One of the most prominent managers in this country, who has been in the habit of sending out from twenty to thirty companies every season, recently announced that for the future he intends to engage actors for the run of a play only. To the actors this means a tremendous difference, of course, but even that seems by comparison a detail to the crucial situation which stares the manager in the face. The goose that laid the golden egg is at its last gasp.

The foreign play-market for the past two years has proved an almost total

failure. Some years ago, in an attempt to corner the foreign play-market, an American manager made the fatal mistake of putting nearly all the foreign playwrights under contract. Worse than that, he paid liberal sums in advance for the option on all their dramatic output. Now anyone who knows anything about writers in general knows that they are proverbially lazy. With their extravagant advance fees safely tucked away in the bank, these playwrights have suddenly lost their enthusiasm for work. Those of them who have continued to work have turned out plays far below their standard. Some of these plays, on the strength of their authors' reputations, have enjoyed short runs, but the bitter experiences of last winter have made the American managers chary of producing plays which have not made enduring successes abroad. And the real hits of the past season in London and Paris could easily be counted on the fingers of one hand. Besides, on the other hand, the day has gone by when America will applaud or flock to see a play simply because Paris has lauded it or London has raved about it.

To my mind the most hopeful feature of the theatrical situation in America is the great spirit of independence and discrimination which the public has shown lately with regard to theatrical attractions. For the managers, to be sure, it has been a bitter experience, but it has taught them, I think, a much needed lesson. They realize that the public is no longer to be taken in by "flubdub"; the bitter truth has been borne in on many of us that the dear old public will no

longer swallow buncombe whole. For four or five years the country enjoyed a period of exceptional prosperity. The people were more or less theatre-mad. Plays good, bad and indifferent attracted large audiences, their managers made money hand over fist. But with last season the tide turned.

The first victim, and the one that most richly deserved its fate, was the badly dramatized novel. The public absolutely refused to swallow any more of these crude and inchoate concoctions dramatized overnight and literally chucked upon the stage after a couple of weeks' rehearsals.

The next in line to suffer was the made-to-order star—the man or woman who, after one or two successes in leading roles, suddenly blossomed out as a would-be arc-light in the theatrical firmament.

If the past disastrous season has done nothing else it has at least reduced these two theatrical impositions to their proper level. And I make this statement in all kindness, too, for no one knows better than I of the ceaseless toil, the unselfish devotion, the indomitable perseverance and the heart-breaking setbacks which many actresses and some few actors are experiencing in their sincere struggles to reach the top of the ladder and to maintain their position there. After an experience of thirty years in theatrical matters—an experience which has covered all the ground from call-boy to actor and from prompter to playwright—I can lay my hand on my heart and say that, leaving genius aside, after all it is work and perseverance alone which tell in this most erratic of professions. No woman can become a great actress who has not drunk deeply and often of life's waters of marah, and no playwright can achieve permanent distinction who is not an indefatigable student of human nature. What tears and heartache do for the actress the ups and downs of everyday life ought to do for the playwright.

The other day I heard a man of position in theatricals gravely assert that the day of the temperamental actor

was gone. The public no longer wanted emotion but preferred lay figures who could counterfeit the emotions with which the playwright had imbued them in a fitting but quite mechanical manner.

Unconsciously, perhaps, that man put his finger on one of the most fatal mistakes which stage managers are making on our stage today. When temperament dies out and mechanism steps in we may as well star marionettes in our theatres at once. Kill temperament and you kill the public's interest in the theatre. A charming personality will carry a marionette far, but without temperament to back it up it will leave the man or woman just on the wrong side of permanent success. I would not pay fifteen dollars a week for the services of an actor or an actress who would guarantee to give exactly the same performance for a hundred nights. The one great point which I always strive to impress on the actors in my companies is to assert their own individuality in their performances. I am perfectly free to confess that some of the finest bits of business I have ever had in my plays have been suggested by some chance gesture or speech which one of my actors has made at rehearsal. Actors, after all, are in many senses grown-up children. You can't drive them; they must be humored. And that is one reason why I say that I would give as little for an untemperamental actor as I would for a stage manager who had not a streak of diplomacy and a strong sense of humor.

Stage management, as a matter of fact, is an art in itself. To achieve success as a stage manager a man must have a wider range of knowledge and acquirements than in any other profession that I know. The low level of the acting on our stages today is due to the fact that we as a theatrical nation are absolutely poverty-stricken in the matter of stage managers. In America the business manager, longing for more artistic laurels than the box-office receipts afford him, has usurped the seat of the stage director. It is to this

fact that I think the appalling ignorance and crudity displayed in many performances are due. The poor actors, badgered and frowned down until every shred of confidence or individuality has left them, not daring to call their souls their own, speak and move entirely as this man dictates. Every speech is studied, every gesture rehearsed until it has lost all trace of spontaneity, and then the poor actor wakes up the morning after the first performance to read that the critics consider him a wooden and mechanical actor! This description is true not of one or two performances, but of at least fifty productions which are brought out in New York in the course of a season. The blame lies not at the actor's door, but at the stage janitor's—for that in my opinion is what many of our managers amount to today: millionaire janitors, if you will, but still *janitors*, for of the glory of the actor's art, the pride in his profession which every true artist always displays, they know nothing. Indeed, they rather pride themselves upon the fact that the money which they have made out of the actor's toil enables them to look down upon the actor as an individual of a distinctly lower grade.

The stage in America today is stagnant on account of the commercial spirit which has been introduced into its dealings during the last six or seven years. No one appreciates and deplores this fact more than the actors themselves—and no one—more's the pity—is so afraid to say so. If the actors are under a yoke of commercial tyranny today they have themselves to blame for it. There was a time seven years ago, when the Theatrical Syndicate was first formed, that Messrs. Joseph Jefferson, Nat Goodwin, Richard Mansfield, Francis Wilson and W.

H. Crane, by merely standing shoulder to shoulder, could have nipped the scheme in its bud. Today, much as any of them privately and unofficially may bemoan this fact, there isn't one of them who doesn't jump when the Syndicate pulls the string. For all the independence which these actors and their managers now assert, they might be so many inanimate displays in the window of a department store, and as a matter of fact their artistic careers are now run almost entirely on department store methods.

The independent manager who dares to make a production on his own account is now almost as extinct as the dodo bird. No matter how great a success his play may prove in New York, unless he concedes to the demands of the Syndicate's booking agents his chances for success on the road are absolutely nil. Five years ago there were at least fifteen or twenty managers in the habit of bringing out from two to three independent productions every year. Where are they today? Either in retirement, in bankruptcy or filling subordinate positions in the Syndicate employ.

Understand me, as a manager I can be quite as commercial as anyone else. No one in the business is more eager to draw audiences to his theatres than I am; no one, I take it, is more desirous of gathering in phenomenal box-office receipts; but when the day ever dawns that I am compelled either by misfortune or the Syndicate to regard my theatre, my productions and my stars purely as commercial commodities, then I shall at least seek the seclusion which some other line of commercial industry might grant me. Under such conditions the theatrical game would scarcely be worth the scandal.



TIMID CONTRIBUTOR—Did you get a manuscript tied up with a blue ribbon?

EDITOR (to boy)—Jim, look over the remnants.

FULFILMENT

"Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief!"

A LL in an hour this youthful prophecy
 Read on my ragged jacket comes to pass.
 The sibyl was Chloise, and it is she
 That shows me now a Proteus in my glass.
 Bonds and securities—I've these to get!
 The limit of my wealth is soon defined,
 I give no largess—sieve of love—and yet
 I am a *rich man* when Chloise is kind.

Though I've confessed to poverty, I boast
 An opulence mere riches can't outvie!
 Health, hopefulness, of friends a merry host,
 A very Crœsus in these things am I!
 But when Chloise plays miser with her smiles,
 And makes her rosy tongue a tiny scourge,
 Though blossoms bower my way and song beguiles
 I am a *poor man* at starvation's verge!

The next step downward's guessed, and easily;
 The starving man, should he not perish soon,
 Turns mendicant and finds humility
 A winning power where pride has lost the boon.
 So when Chloise laughs at, ignores my wants,
 I pocket all my pride—well, all I *can!*—
 My riches quite forgotten for the nonce,
 Behold in me a humble *beggar man*!

And if Chloise still obdurate remains,
 Proclaims me an impostor and denies
 That which she would not miss; which through my veins
 Would send the red blood coursing torrent-wise;
 If then she gives me opportunity
 By turning her dear back upon my grief,
 My downfall is complete. Ah! pity me
 That I should come at last to be a *thief!*

EDWARD W. BARNARD.



HUSBAND—What! four weeks at that summer resort! Why, last year you
 were satisfied with two.

WIFE—But, darling, I am so much stronger this year.

WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF CONSTANTINE DIX

By Barry Pain

I HAVE already disclaimed any overmastering ambitions. I care nothing about the coup for its own sake. There are men who seek out the difficult coup, just as an artist may intentionally seek difficulties of subject or treatment in a story or picture. I prefer easy work, when I can get it. Nor has wealth any such charms for me that I would take absurd risks to obtain it. For years past an annual income of £2,000 has satisfied me. I live regularly, and am aware that any sudden increase of means and expenditure with nothing to account for it is likely to render one an object of suspicion. All thieves know this, but comparatively few can bring themselves to act upon it.

Take, for instance, the case of Ikey. He is not unintelligent. As an inspector of an Electric Lighting Company he is admirable. He carries a notebook with the right name and address of the company stamped in gold on its morocco cover, and the book is partly filled with notes and figures that would deceive anybody except an electrician. He carries a printed card of authorization and a little brown bag with apparatus in it. The apparatus consists of a compass, a screw-driver and two coils of bell-wire, so it is not remarkably electrical. But it suffices; in fact, Ikey has said to me that no servant in London is able to doubt him after he has once opened that bag and produced the bell-wire. He knows nothing whatever of electricity. He told one old lady in Berkeley Square that the *ampère* wanted cleaning, and he was

afraid he would have to unscrew the volts. But he knows when it is best for him to look very serious and to say very little. In this way he has in one morning cleared a thousand pounds' worth of diamonds from a good house in the West End. Naturally, the "fence" gave him rather less than one-tenth of this sum, but it was too much for Ikey. He could not resist new clothes, some showy jewelry and an inclination to stand drinks freely and to brag of his coup. So, of course, the police got him.

There have been times when I have undertaken an adventure of considerable risk for the sake of considerable profit. There was, for instance, the case of the Manton-on-Sea branch of Appleby, Hanson & Lane's Bank. I had just purchased my motor-car, one of my three banking accounts was very low, and I did not wish to realize investments. The risks were great, but they were not absurd; the branch was in temporary premises at the time, and one or two other accidental circumstances were in my favor. It was merely necessary for me to drug three people, and I did it. The manager himself was a teetotaler, and as earnest and God-fearing a man as ever I saw; but he was a bit of a hypochondriac, and quite ready to try my new medicine. I felt sorry for him at the time. The amount in gold was much less than I had expected, and I did not care to touch the notes, but, on the whole, I was fairly satisfied. Still, I avoid such work as a rule. The only way by which I care to open a good safe or

strong room is by its own proper keys, and too many accidents are possible in getting and using them.

That business with the bank then turned out more easy than I had expected. Frequently the reverse has been the case. I have taken on something that looked perfectly soft and simple, and have given weeks of time and thought before I could bring it to a successful issue. This was the case with the miser of Darwen village.

I was staying at Brighton at the time, and in the course of a long walk I stopped for rest and refreshment at the Crown Inn at Darwen. It is a quiet and old-fashioned inn, with a comfortable and sleepy landlord. As I sat chatting with my host, a little old man of strange appearance came in. He was very dirty and very ragged. He had a timid and watery eye and thin lips pressed tightly together. His rags were not those that would have been worn by a laborer, nor was his appearance that of one of the laboring class. His voice, as I noticed when he spoke, was that of a man of refinement and education.

"Good morning, Mr. Jacobs," said the landlord, with something like a wink in my direction, as though to bid me watch what would happen.

"Good morning, sir," said the old man. "A beautiful morning for walking, though the air is somewhat chilly. I have called in because I have a present to make you. I wish to give you something."

The landlord grinned good-humoredly. The little old man dived into the pocket of his shabby gray overcoat and pulled out two large apples.

"There, sir!" he said. "I should not say it, but they are beautiful fruit. You will find nothing like them in Darwen. And I will trouble you for six-pennyworth of brandy."

The landlord, still grinning, put the apples on a shelf, and measured out the old man's drink. Mr. Jacobs had, with the apples, pulled out an empty clay pipe, gazed at it and then up at the ceiling.

"There is some delicious tobacco

being smoked in this room," he said reflectively. "I like to drink in its fragrance for a minute or two before I spoil it with my pipeful of a ranker and cheaper variety. The poor must not expect too much. I have always maintained that the poor are wrong when they expect too much."

I was the only man in the room who was smoking, and I passed my pouch over to him.

"Thank you, sir," he said. "I did not intend to trespass upon you in this way—nothing was further from my thoughts. Still, as you so kindly insist, I will partake."

He filled his clay pipe, and palmed some more of the tobacco when he thought that he was unobserved. He lighted his pipe with a match from the stand and, in an absent-minded way, slid a few of the matches into his pocket. Then he turned to the landlord. "And how much am I indebted to you, sir, for this refreshment?"

"Why, nothing, Mr. Jacobs. Surely, if I accept your presents, I may offer you a friendly glass."

"If you wish it, let it be so. You are very kind. The world is in many respects better than the cynics would have us believe. There are still great and generous hearts. Good morning to both of you."

He went out, and the landlord immediately burst out laughing.

"That's a queer old chap," I said.

"He is," said the landlord. "They call him the miser of Darwen. He is worth twenty-five thousand pounds, so they say, and he lives alone in a cottage that isn't fit to keep a dog in. I have never seen a penny of his money in my life. He brings fruit or he brings vegetables, and goes through the same bit of play-acting that you saw just now. Of course, I don't want his apples; everybody has got more apples than they can give away this year. It's the same with all his presents, but I don't care. The old chap always makes me laugh, and it's dull enough in a little place like this. Besides, he can't last much longer, and who knows but what he may remember me? He

tried the same game on at the Blue Boar, bottom of the village, but the chap there wouldn't have it. Did you twig him sneaking your 'baccy?"

This was interesting. I got the landlord to tell me all he knew about Jacobs. He was, it appeared, in receipt of an annuity of two pounds a week, and for the last thirty years, so the villagers computed, he had never spent more than six shillings a week. His garden and cottage were his own freehold; the cottage was in a most wretched condition, but he refused to spend a penny on it. Once a year—the villagers said it was on his birthday—he would give a child a penny to whiten the step in front of his door, and for weeks afterward would avoid using that step. But with this exception he did everything for himself. Sometimes he even earned a little money. He was, the landlord said, a scholar, and had written letters for people in the village in cases where a noble and correct style was felt to be worth a penny a page. He had no bank account, and it was supposed that his savings were hidden in his cottage, which he would never leave for more than a quarter of an hour at a time. "Not that he need trouble himself," said the landlord, "for we are all honest in Darwen. Like to see the old chap's shanty? It's only just across the road there."

All of this seemed to me to be particularly good. There would be no twenty-five thousand, of course, but there would be a sum very well worth taking, and, so it seemed at the time, very easy to take. I told the landlord that I should stop at his inn for a day or two. I did not think so simple a business could possibly take longer. In reality, I stopped there a month and was compelled to neglect my reformation work in London in a way that I greatly regretted. However, I went back there at the end of that month with renewed health and strength from my holiday in the country—and with something else besides.

The next time I encountered Jacobs was again in the bar of the Crown.

He had presented, with great solemnity, three exceedingly small potatoes, and had ordered a pint of old ale very much as if he had had an intention of paying for it. It was easy enough to get into conversation with him; he himself began it.

"I cannot but remember you, sir. That one little pipe of your excellent tobacco has been fragrant in my memory ever since."

I renewed his acquaintance with it, and asked him if he could tell me of anyone in the village who would call in the evening to take my letters to the post, and could do neat and legible copying.

"Might I inquire what the terms would be?"

I satisfied him on this point, and he turned the matter over in his own mind. The post-office was a full mile from his own cottage, but the copying work which I had added by way of bait attracted him.

"I am, sir," he said, "a bachelor of arts of the University of Oxford. I admit that I do not look it, but it is the case. I shall be pleased to undertake the copying on the terms you suggest, and any passer-by will always be willing to post your letters for you."

I explained to him that this would not do; it was essential that my letters should be posted by a responsible person—someone whom I could trust, not a chance person who might lose them or forget them or stay to talk on the way and thus miss the post. Finally, though with some apparent misgiving, he gave way.

The lock on the cottage door presented no difficulties. I went all over the place that night while Jacobs was away at the post. It was a three-room cottage, standing in a small garden with a few fruit trees at the back. It looked disreputable enough on the outside. The roof was crazy and half covered with ivy. Windows were patched and gutters broken. Clouds of flies hovered over the fetid green water in the butt at the corner of the house. On the other hand, the garden was well-kept and cultivated. There

were no flowers there; the miser grew nothing that he could not eat. And the interior of the cottage surprised me. It was more tidy and clean than I had expected. What little furniture there was seemed, for the most part, to have been made by the miser himself from old packing-cases. There were hanging book-shelves on the walls, and the books in them were all classical. In fact, I found the *Phædo* lying open on the kitchen table. But I did not find any trace of the hidden treasure. After three more visits I came to the conclusion that it could not be in the cottage at all. I had probed and examined everywhere, and it could not have escaped me. So I gave up the cottage and tried the garden. It seemed to me quite likely that the old man buried his money; his gardening operations would provide a useful cover for it.

I learned that garden by heart. I knew every inch of it, and day after day I waited to see if there was any disturbance of the soil that might give me a clue. Hidden by the high hedge at the further end, I watched the old man at work there. I tried the trunks of the fruit trees, to see if they could be used as a hiding place. All was in vain. The miser's gardening was of the most ordinary and genuine description, and his trees were all solid. I had gone into this matter as if it were child's play, and it was giving me far more trouble than the bank's local branch had done. I took to watching the place at night, and all that I could discover was that the old man slept from five to nine with the utmost regularity. I began to think that the money could not be there at all. But I had assured myself of the existence of the annuity, and that Jacobs did not spend the money, and that he did not bank it. Where, then, could it be?

I might have remained in ignorance to this day if it had not been for the fact that one afternoon a sandy-colored gutter-cat went to sleep on the path just outside the miser's garden gate. She awoke as a group of boys came along from school, and slipped through

into the garden. The foremost boy sent a stone after her, and missed her. The stone struck the water butt. I had witnessed the little incident, and I now knew where Jacobs kept his savings. The sound the stone made was not what it would have been if the butt had been full of water—as it apparently was, and as I had always supposed it to be. I went back to the inn, had a cup of tea, and wrote a reply to a letter I had received from my friend, the Rev. Arthur Hope, asking when he could see me in town about a poor family in which we were both interested. I was able to give him an appointment for two days later.

That night I sent Jacobs off with my letter to the post, and made an examination. The butt consisted of a large barrel standing on end, and divided just above the bung-hole into two parts. The upper part was filled with water. The money was kept in the lower part. The bung was easily removed, but I could not get my hand in. With my stick I could feel down onto a concrete floor heaped with coins.

I was in no hurry now. I went back to my rooms and thought the thing over. The old fool had used this place with success for years, and had probably grown very confident about it. He dropped his sovereigns through the bung-hole, and loved to think how they were accumulating. It was the only pleasure money could give him. Every miser is a madman. If I had taken the hoard that night it is quite possible he would never have discovered his loss. But if he did it was also quite likely that suspicion would fall on me. To divert it, I should have had to remain in the place for some time longer and to have continued the farce of giving him employment. This would have been very tiresome to me. So I left for London the following morning, without the money.

About six weeks later I was stopping at my Brighton house, and I thought I might as well walk over to Darwen one night. I chose a dark night, and took precautions to establish an alibi if one should prove necessary. At the

time that I was walking to Darwen my household was convinced that I was asleep in bed.

I had at first intended to cut a hole through the barrel and get the money that way. But I gave up this idea; it would have made it quite certain that the miser would discover his loss. The method I chose was to fish out the money. It was the more tedious way, but it would leave no immediate evidence that the hoard had been disturbed; and, if nothing were found out, it might be worth my while to try the same thing again in a year or two.

I do not know why, but I was very nervous about this simple affair—possibly because it had given me so much trouble at the outset. For instance, I had provided myself with a loaded line and a tin of birdlime, but I decided that these things came within the category of suspicious apparatus. I took with me instead a bottle of my hair-dresser's "Mustacheoline." This is an innocent preparation for dressing the mustache. It is a fluid, but on exposure to the air it becomes hard and intensely sticky.

Half a mile outside Darwen I left the road and took to the fields. I approached Jacobs's cottage from the back. The whole place was as still as a little village generally is at midnight. I had cut a little sprig of furze and tied it to the end of a string. I smeared this with the preparation, and attached to it the seal I wore on my watch-chain to serve as a weight. Then I knelt beside the water butt, and lowered my line through the bung-hole. The first time I got four sovereigns, and the second time three. Once or twice a coin fell back on the heap just as I was raising it, and I would wait a minute or two until I was sure that the chink had not by any chance been heard. It was a slow and laborious business, and all the time I was most unaccountably timid and jumpy. When I had got two hundred and fifty I gave up, though I was nothing like at the end of the heap.

I got back home without an ad-

venture of any kind, but when I met a policeman in Brighton street I nearly jumped out of my skin, and though I was dead tired when I got home, I was too excited to sleep. I was thoroughly ashamed of myself, and if my nerves often gave way like this I should at once choose some other means of providing for myself. I believe in proper precautions, and I despise the recklessness which sooner or later is sure to end in detection. But when once the plan is made and the decision taken, there should be calm presence of mind in its execution, and this I had not shown. I record my weakness, because in these pages I wish to give the truth without self-glorification.

A week later, finding that Jacobs had apparently never discovered his loss, I walked into Darwen and had a talk with him. He was just going into the Crown, and had a small cauliflower with him. He seemed a little hurt that the landlord did not show more enthusiasm about that cauliflower, but otherwise he was quite happy. I felt that I had done a good action. He was none the worse and I was two hundred and fifty pounds the better. Money was meant to be used.

In the course of the next year I paid two other nocturnal visits to Mr. Jacobs's water butt. On the first occasion, when I was interrupted, I took thirty pounds, and on the next day, when I was able to give more time to it, I secured three hundred and eighty. On both of these occasions I was pleased to find that my nerves were in their normal condition. With this I was satisfied, though I might have gone back yet again but for the poor old man's sudden death from double pneumonia. In his will he left a statement of the sum that would be found in the bottom of the water butt, and this was discovered by his executors to be quite inaccurate. There was a shortage of six hundred and sixty pounds, a sum for which they will, if they ever read my memoirs, now be able to account. As it was, they decided that the old man must have hidden this money elsewhere, and forgotten all about it. They searched the

house and the garden with the utmost thoroughness; the whole of the garden was dug up and the cottage was nearly pulled down. And even then, when the property came into the market, it fetched twice its proper value, as the purchaser believed that he had a chance of finding the missing six hundred and sixty.

Jacobs's executors were his solicitors, and, after their expenses had been paid, the rest of his money went to his old college, St. Cecilia's, at Oxford. His college had refused him the fellowship which he confidently expected, and since that time he had had no connection with it. There was no reason why he should have left his money there, and I was glad that I had been

able to rescue six hundred and sixty of it from aiding an institution for providing a classical and useless education. Not one penny was left to the landlord of the Crown who had frequently and in many ways befriended the old miser.

I am not accustomed to feel remorse for any theft that I may commit. I am a born thief; I thieve very well; theft is a thing, as I have said, that I do best and like best. But it is seldom that I can look back on any of my operations with the immense satisfaction that this has given me. Jacobs was not a man who in a really civilized country would have been allowed to possess any money at all, and my only regret is that I did not take more.



FOR ONE WHO LOVES TOO MUCH

AFTER MENDES

I AM the bird that sings and goes,
You are the rosebush spray;
And you are wild, while I am gay,
I am the song, you are the rose.

I mock and laugh, but yet—who knows?—
Your rose-bloom may be mine today;
I am the bird that sings and goes,
You are the rosebush spray.

But if some stormy tempest blows
And, as your branches bend and sway,
Tears rudely your pure bloom away,
Ask not my grief for you, my rose—
I am the bird that sings and goes.

WILL McCOURTIE.



THE woman who is a heroine to her maid is greater than any valeted hero.

LA COUPE

Par Paul et Victor Margueritte

LA CRAVACHE sous le bras, bien pris dans l'habit rouge étoffant le buste et pinçant la taille, Jacques de Crétonne, en boutonnant son gant, inspecta, d'un bref coup d'œil satisfait, l'éclat de sa culotte blanche et de ses bottes vernies. Très chic! Une espèce d'uniforme qui lui allait aussi bien que l'autre, celui sous lequel, sanglé dans sa veste de lieutenant de chasseurs, il avait triomphé, hier, au Championnat du cheval d'armes...

Il honora d'un regard circulaire et bienveillant l'assistance coutumière, le petit monde d'officiers, de sportsmen, de snobs, qui, derrière la tribune du comité, agitait son va-et-vient élégant, groupes bourdonnants sillonnés de chevaux, qu'amenaient, tenaient par la bride des soldats d'ordonnance, des valets d'écurie à lèvre et menton rasés...

— Tiens! Un tel... bonjour!... — Comment va, d'Espars?... — Mon général!...

Du bout des doigts, d'un hochement de tête familier, de la brusque immobilisation d'un salut militaire, Jacques de Crétonne accueillait, prévenait chacun, à l'amusant hasard des rencontres, dans ce mouvement de foule choisie, cette atmosphère fiévreuse un peu, qui faisait penser à une attente de coulisses, dans un décor.

Et c'était une rumeur d'immense théâtre qui, sous les vastes coupoles vitrées, élevait cet indistinct brouhaha, montant de tout le gigantesque rectangle des tribunes, étagées, noires de monde, autour de l'étendue de la piste. Il flottait, dans le jour ora-

geux des grands vitrages, dans cette clarté comme artificielle, une espèce d'électricité humaine, où se mêlait, au parfum léger des toilettes claires, l'odeur, sensible à peine, mais spéciale, des cirques.

Cette idée: l'Hippique, cirque parisien, mondain par excellence, et qu'il en était, lui, Jacques-Pierre-Aimé de Crétonne, un des acteurs en vogue, une seconde, le traversa, divertissante. Et, aussitôt, il en savoura un orgueil plus vif. C'était aujourd'hui une des sensationnelles épreuves, ce prix de la Coupe, qu'il s'agissait d'enlever en un parcours sans fautes... De tout son désir énervé, de tout son amour-propre tendu, il hâta l'instant de s'enlever en selle, d'apparaître, dans la piste nue, hérissée d'obstacles...

Un coup de cloche. Le son bien connu, qui suspend ou clôt les parcours... Jacques de Crétonne l'entend retentir, en pleine chair... Il consulte le programme: Numéro 15; deux tours encore... C'est que ce n'est pas seulement affaire professionnelle, l'agréable vanité d'un succès de plus. Non, aujourd'hui, son destin se décide. Ou plutôt il faut qu'il décide de son destin. Résolution prise de la veille, fermement arrêtée... Il ne peut tergiverser, hésiter plus longtemps... Henriette ou Angèle...

Il reçoit les deux sœurs telles qu'hier — comme il allait les saluer, après sa course, — elles l'ont troublé, enchanté, une fois de plus... La brune, la blonde... Si diverses, également jolies... Henriette, avec son teint mat, comme doré de soleils lointains, ses yeux bleus moqueurs, ses lourds cheveux noirs massés en bandeau souple,

sous la paille claire du chapeau de roses... Mais Angèle, Angèle plus svelte, plus mignonne encore, avec son visage si doux, son teint de fleur neigeuse, ses admirables cheveux d'or sombre... Il revoit, sous la toque de bleuets, l'air rêveur, le fin profil...

Et, perplexe, il songe: Laquelle?... Non point: Laquelle m'aime ou m'aimera?... Cela, c'est secondaire, cela viendra de soi, naturellement, après... Si, pour toutes deux, — il a un sourire fat, — cela n'est venu, déjà... Non, Jacques de Crétonne se dit seulement: "Voilà le moment, le bon moment de me marier... Trente-quatre ans, bientôt... Qu'est-ce que la vie de garçon m'apporterait de plus?... J'en connais, trop! les joies banales... Je suis payé, non, j'ai payé pour les connaître!... Qu'est-ce qu'il me reste? Une dizaine de mille livres de rente sur vingt-cinq... En revanche, heureusement, un coffre solide, et ce qu'on est convenu d'appeler un beau, hum! soyons modeste, un joli physique... Carrière assurée; capitaine l'an prochain, et avec mon âge, mes relations... Eh! eh! les deux étoiles... M^{me} la générale de Crétonne..."

Il se dit encore: "Excellent parti, que ces deux petites Talapoint-Burot. La famille est de la meilleure bourgeoisie industrielle et parlementaire; gens bien pensants, dot de trois cent mille, minimum, et les espérances... Oui, oui... Mais laquelle, laquelle aimé-je, aimeraï-je davantage?... Alternatives, simultanées, les deux images charmantes surgissaient, emplissaient sa pensée. Il ne se pouvait détacher de l'une que pour se rattacher à l'autre. Toutes deux lui plaisaient infiniment. Il organisait sa vie future selon les yeux bleus d'Henriette, ou selon le lumineux regard marron d'Angèle, et s'il y prenait d'avance une identique joie, il ne savait, ne pouvait concevoir quelle plus grande peine lui causerait l'un des deux renoncements..."

La cloche encore. La rentrée d'un des habits rouges, genoux crispés au flanc de bête vibrante, secouant le mors... Les fanfares de trompes... Le cheminement hâtif des beaux mes-

sieurs et des belles dames, traversant la piste, pour gagner en hâte la tribune réservée... Cette fois, c'est à lui. Voici Mabel, que Lucas, son ordonnance, maintient, tête haute. La jument, inquiète, darde de droite et de gauche son gros œil rond. Campée sur ses pattes, la peau plissée de frémissements où le poil lustré s'argente, l'alezane bat, de sa queue longue de pur-sang.

Jacques de Crétonne, d'un geste machinal, vérifie la sangle, les étriers, tâte la gourmette. Il tente d'apaiser, à petites tapes amicales, le long de l'encolure soyeuse, la bête qui s'impatiente:

— Là! là! Mabel...

— J'sais pas c'quelle a, mon lieutenant, dit l'ordonnance, pesant sur l'étrier hors montoir. Elle ne fait que danser depuis une heure.

Mais déjà Jacques de Crétonne est en selle, rassemble Mabel, qui mâche le mors, détend nerveusement, à coups saccadés, l'encolure...

Là! là!... Jacques, de sa main douce et ferme, de ses longues jambes, maîtrise sa monture, reprend l'habituelle possession... Le cœur lui bat, à peine.. Cette cloche ne sonnera donc pas?... Juste!... Les fanfares, le chapelet des retardataires qui s'égrène, en travers de la piste... *Go ahead!...* Il dépasse la tribune de comité... Il est en plein cirque, sous la pesante clarté des vitrages, dans l'immense rectangle des tribunes, bondées de foule, où il ne distingue rien, d'abord, que les taches gaies des toilettes de femmes, une houle confuse de visages...

Maintenant son cœur a cessé de battre; il est très pâle, mais d'un absolu sang-froid, d'une lucidité entière, qui lui permet d'embrasser, d'un seul regard, tout le dispositif des obstacles, l'ensemble du parcours, tel détail des tribunes... Angèle et Henriette sont là, comme d'habitude, à droite de l'entrée, tribune des abonnés, premier rang... Et tout soudain s'évanouit, se fond dans une demi-conscience, à la fois obscure et très nette, où il agit. Il n'y a plus que lui, Mabel et l'obstacle. ...Hop! Il escalade la banquette,

dégringole son raide talus... Le tournant, déjà... Mabel galope à faux... Ah! la barre!... Hop! ça y est...

Les obstacles, un à un, surgissent, disparaissent... Attention!... le triple sauté... Parfait... Le tournant encore... La barre... Jacques, tranquille, exulte... Mabel, quoique un peu folle, a tous ses moyens... Pas une faute encore... Le plus dur est fait... Il ne reste que cette sacrée barrière de la fin, où les taquets ont toujours l'air de tomber exprès, et puis la haie... A moi, la coupe!...

Attention! la barrière... Mabel, excitée, gagne à la main... Hop!...

Une sensation d'éclair... Hein, quoi?... Elle a sauté trop court, enlevée d'un bond formidable, inutile... Les pattes de derrière qui accrochent... Mabel se reçoit mal, bute... Les genoux touchent... Crétonne à demi désarçonné, se voit à terre, ridicule, meurtri... Un murmure apitoyé, des cris d'effroi montent des tribunes proches, des femmes se penchent, tandis qu'au loin, indifférent, le grand brouhaha continue...

C'est fini. Le cœur percé, étouffant de rage, Crétonne mesure la partie perdue, remâche la déshonorante aventure... Mais déjà, d'un suprême élan, d'un instinctif effort, Mabel est debout, son cavalier par miracle resté, rétabli en selle. Hop! hop! au galop... La haie? franchie d'un saut splendide, et dans les bravos compensateurs, au bruit de la cloche et des fanfares,

Crétonne rentre, désolé... A d'autres la coupe. Du moins, l'honneur est sauf...

C'est ce qu'il se répète, deux heures après, en se dirigeant vers l'hôtel des Talapoint-Burot. Une irréprochable redingote grise, à la boutonnière de violette de Parme, a remplacé l'habit rouge. Et Jacques de Crétonne se demande aussi: — Qu'est-ce qu'elles vont me dire? Il ne se l'avoue pas, sent pourtant bien que de l'accueil qu'elles lui vont faire, Angèle, Henriette—des événements, une décision, sa vie, qui sait? dépendent... L'escalier de marbre, le grand salon...

Ah! les voici... Henriette est assise dans la bergère Louis XVI... Angèle, appuyée à la cheminée, tourne le dos... Quelles sont jolies!... Crétonne, le cœur battant comme avant, plus qu'avant la course, ardemment, attend, souhaite qu'elles l'épargnent, compatissent... Henriette tend la main, en riant:

— Vous nous en avez fait, une belle peur!

— N'est-ce pas, dit Jacques.

A la vue du paisible, presque moqueur visage, un sentiment de recul, d'involontaire vexation, le saisit. Mais Angèle s'est retournée, murmure:

— J'espère que vous ne disputerez jamais plus ce vilain prix!

Et dans ce simple mot, dans la prière de la voix qui tremble un peu, Jacques subitement comprend. Sa défaite, c'est une victoire... Henriette?

— Angèle! Il a choisi.



THE KIND SHE LIKED

VON BLUMER—Write a love letter to my wife and I'll sign it.
CLERK—What amount?



PEOPLE who live in stone houses should never throw glasses.

A FRAGMENT

SO dark—the rain is chill, the bitter wind
 The tree-top tears, my frail nest mocks and rends;
 Below, the birds sleep quiet, warm and safe
 Behind the sheltering hill; up near the sky
 The branches bend and snap—the wild storm takes
 My dwelling for a plaything; still it clings
 To the swaying bough; yet, though it bide or fall,
 Grieve not, my soul, that we have built so high.

ALLAN MUNIER.



WAYS AND MEANS

IT was a gathering of bohemians with a leaning toward respectability, and of respectability with a leaning toward bohemia. Someone, more philistine than the others, or actuated perhaps by a desire for psychological information, asked of the fair, young-girl novelist whose books were the talk of the week:

“How can a young girl of family and social position like yours bring it upon herself to write books no self-respecting matron wants to be seen reading?”

The maiden smiled sweetly without offense. “I find I must write indecent things if I wish to live decently,” she answered.

In a corner sat the staid, middle-aged editor of a most respectable family weekly, the sort of thing all good church people and stanch supporters of law and order read.

“Lucky girl,” he murmured, audible only to the group immediately surrounding him. “The case is different with me. I find I must write decent things if I want to live indecently.”



URBS IN RURE

MRS. SUBURBANITE—That grass is getting awfully long, my dear.
MR. SUBURBANITE—So I see. I'll have to have a guest out from town.

A NATURAL CONCLUSION

By Theodosia Garrison

If it hadn't been for Mrs. Worthington I might never have known Billy. Of course I understand that two people destined for each other are bound to come together some day, but I might have been very old and lost my hair and worn an alpaca dress by then, and Billy might not have been the perfect god he is now. And Mrs. Worthington did introduce us in the little summer-house at Monmouth just before the dancing began, and I was wearing my highest heels and prettiest gown, so I really give more of the credit to her than to Fate.

Mrs. Worthington and I were never friends exactly. Of course she was very old—she must be thirty-five anyway—but we girls all admired her immensely. She was such a beautiful, mysterious-looking woman and wore such lovely gowns that trailed yards behind her, and she usually sat on the beach with a book when we bathed. She had the whitest skin, which never seemed to burn or freckle or tan like a commonplace person's, and the darkest eyes and reddest mouth I ever saw; and her face was very sad except when she smiled, and then it was wonderful—like an electric light switched on in a dark room. She didn't smile often, though, for she didn't seem to care for the people in the hotel. She told me once that she couldn't speak their language because she had no idea of the different embroidery stitches and had never undergone an operation, and they didn't care to talk about anything else.

Clarisse Gray's mother said that Mrs. Worthington's sadness was only a pose. She had a second cousin in New York

who knew her and wrote Mrs. Gray about her. The cousin said that Mrs. Worthington was extremely wealthy and people esteemed it a great honor to go to her teas; that she had a husband who was a drug-fiend and had been in a sanatorium for eight years, and she had no children to bother her; so of course there was no reason why she shouldn't be absolutely happy.

I was drying my hair on the beach one morning when she spoke to me and asked if I wouldn't come under her beach-umbrella, and said that I had the prettiest hair she had ever seen, and, of course, I liked her very much and we chatted until the gong rang for luncheon.

She laughed a great deal that morning. I don't know why, for we talked about serious things like literature and happiness and religion. She was reading a book by an Italian with a long name—d'Annunzio, I believe—and she asked me if I had read it, and I told her no; that I didn't care for Italian literature. We had to read Dante in school and it was perfectly awful, and I asked her what this book was like, and she said it was like smelling incense burning in a black, rotting swamp. It seemed such a strange way to describe a book. She asked me who my favorite author was, and I told her that I thought The Duchess wrote the most beautiful love scenes in the world, and she said that she had no doubt that that was true. Then she looked at me and laughed, and asked me if I would tell her what my idea of real happiness was. I suppose she thought I was an awfully silly little thing because I told her that I thought to go

to the matinee with a chum and a big box of caramels was the most adorable thing in the world—a real sad play that made you cry was the kind I liked best, because the caramels always seemed so comforting between the acts.

Oh, we talked a long time, and she really seemed to like me very much. I thought she was lovely, though I didn't quite understand all she said.

Well, after that she used to talk to me every day on the beach, and we were very friendly. She said that I must come and see her in New York, because I was really the most refreshing person she had ever met. It sounded as though I were cake and lemonade, but I promised to come, and mama said she would go, too, though Mrs. Worthington had never quite invited her.

Mama was delighted because Mrs. Worthington was so nice to me. She said that it really paid, after all, to come to a first-class hotel, even though we had to skimp dreadfully all winter and live in a little flat in Harlem with the sewing-machine in the dining-room. Of course we always put the machine in the maid's room when we have company, and the room is so small that there is no place for it except on the bed; so the maid has to sit up until the company goes.

We seem to be always changing our maid. I don't know why, I'm sure, because mama is most reasonable and never insists upon her wearing a cap except when people are coming or she hangs the clothes upon the roof. In fact, my mama, as I used to hear her tell my father before he died, had all the instincts of a lady although she had to live on a beggarly bookkeeper's salary.

But I am getting away from Mrs. Worthington and Billy. His name is really William Ashburton Castle, and he is a very old friend of Mrs. Worthington's husband, and she has known him for years. I suppose they are really like brother and sister, even if she is so much older than he. Billy is thirty-two.

I was in the office that morning when

the mail came, and there was a letter for Mrs. Worthington, so I carried it over to her in the little summer-house and sat there while she read it. I never saw her look so lovely. Her whole face seemed to change, and her eyes grew so soft and gentle, almost as if they had tears in them. I couldn't help telling her how beautiful she looked, and she laughed and said it was because her letter had good news in it; that an old friend of hers, who had been away on his yacht for three months, was home again and would be at the beach that very evening.

"Is he an old gentleman, Mrs. Worthington?" I asked; and she laughed again and told me that Mr. Castle was a very wonderful young man who could outwalk and outplay any other man in the world, and that he had just come from South America, where he had been helping to dig up some buried city that he intended writing a book about, and was coming to stay the week-end with her because the next week he was going to Canada after moose. Gracious! It was like looking at someone with St. Vitus's dance just to hear of it.

"If I were going to stop on here instead of going to town Monday, I should make him stay," Mrs. Worthington said—not to me, but exactly as though she were thinking out loud.

Then she seemed to remember me and took hold of my hand. "You shall meet him, Muriel," she said. "I've written him that I found a little girl here who brought back my vanished youth and the mad desire for ice-cream soda and marshmallows, that died in my teens." And of course I thanked her and said I would love to meet him; but I didn't want to, really. I thought he would be one of those nervous, jumpy persons with spectacles who talk about things you have no interest in. Oh, if I had only known!

I never saw mama so excited as when I told her that Mr. Castle was coming to see Mrs. Worthington and she wished me to meet him. She looked exactly like a cat ready to spring. She asked

me if it was Mr. William Ashburton Castle, and when I said yes, she said he was one of the wealthiest young men in the world and belonged to seven clubs; that his grandfather had made all his money in a perfectly disgraceful deal for which he had come very near going to jail. My mother has a wonderful memory. She never forgets how large a person's income is or any terrible thing that happened in their families, no matter how many years ago it was.

Anyway, she made me change my gown and do my hair over twice, and she put the curling-irons in the lamp and curled her front-piece—it is a lovely one, even if it doesn't match her back hair very well—and we were late getting down to dinner.

Mr. Castle must have come on the early train, for Mrs. Worthington and he were coming out of the dining-room as we went in, and honestly I never had such a surprise in my life. Instead of the nervous little wizened man with spectacles I expected to see, there was the biggest, handsomest, really the most gorgeous man I had ever seen in my life. He looked exactly like the pictures in the back of magazines of the men who wear Somebody's ready-made suits, and I always thought they were too wonderful to be real.

Mrs. Worthington looked lovely, too. She had on a new gown, or at least one she hadn't worn at the hotel before. All the old ladies on the porch were talking about it when I came out from dinner. Mrs. Worthington and Mr. Castle were in the little summer-house, and Mrs. Worthington beckoned me to come out, and of course I went, though I hated to, for my heart was beating just as it does before the curtain goes up at a matinee, and I knew I was blushing terribly.

We talked for quite a long time. At least Mrs. Worthington asked me a great many questions, and I answered them, mostly about the things we had talked about on the beach, and she kept looking at Mr. Castle as though she expected him to laugh.

Sept. 1904

I don't know why, I'm sure, for he looked rather annoyed, I thought, and we were speaking of really serious things.

The musicians began to play in the casino just then; they did every Saturday night, though nearly all the people had left the hotel, and there was nobody to dance except some of the girls. We used to have great fun dancing together; the girls that played men would tie handkerchiefs around their arms.

Mrs. Worthington patted me on the head exactly the way Mrs. Gray pats Fifi, her white pug, and said: "There, dear, run away to your dancing like a good child." And I laughed and said that I might as well stay with them because there was nobody to dance with, anyway; and suddenly Mr. Castle stood up and said: "Won't you take me for a partner, Miss Muriel?" Of course I said I would be perfectly delighted, but Mrs. Worthington laughed.

"What, *you*, Billy?" she said, as though she were amused; and Mr. Castle lifted his eyebrows just a trifle and answered: "My dear Constance, why not? I'm not ninety yet, and I'm fairly sound in wind and limb."

Then Mrs. Worthington laughed once more, not as though she was very pleased, I thought. I suppose she wanted to talk to Mr. Castle about her husband.

Well, we had a perfectly lovely waltz, and after that a two-step, and after that another waltz, and I knew the girls were mad with envy, though they pretended not to look at me at all, and mama was so excited that she had pushed her front around until the parting went almost from ear to ear. She nearly died when I told her about it.

After the last waltz Mr. Castle thanked me as though I were a princess, and I'm sure he thought I was a silly little thing because I only blushed and couldn't think of a thing to say to him. Then he said good night and went back to the summer-house, and afterward I saw Mrs.

Worthington walk with him toward the beach.

Mrs. Worthington had told me that she meant to take the early train for New York the next day, and they had gone when we went down to breakfast. I could have cried, for I am awfully fond of Mrs. Worthington, and she had forgotten to leave her card for me, and mama was cross all day because her front had been on crooked the night before, and the hotel seemed horribly empty and dull.

I was sitting on the porch in the evening thinking how glad I would be to get back to New York again, when suddenly someone behind me said: "How do you do, Miss Muriel? Won't you say you are glad to see me?" And there was Mr. Castle.

I never was so surprised in my life, and the first thing I said was: "Why, I thought you were going to Canada!" So silly! but he answered very politely: "I'm going next week. This seems such a jolly little place here that I'm thinking of stopping for a day or so."

Of course he told me afterward that the reason he came was because he had fallen in love with me the night before, and he had to come back just to see if I were real or only an exquisite delusion in a pink dress. I adore hearing Billy talk.

Well, I would just love to go into details, but the next week so much happened that it all seems a beautiful blur. Mr. Castle never mentioned Canada. Mama was so excited that she lost pounds running about, and Billy and I were together all day long, and he would tell me the most wonderful things about myself. Of course I always knew I was pretty, but I never thought I was as lovely as he seemed to think.

Oh, the days went by like a dream, and at the end of the week Billy and mama had a long talk. Mama came out looking perfectly glorified, and Billy took me down on the beach and asked me to marry him, and I cried and he kissed me, and it was just lovely and romantic, and I was en-

gaged to Mr. William Ashburton Castle.

About everyone had left the hotel by the last of September, but Billy urged mama to stay on until it closed. He didn't have to urge very much. The weather was lovely, and Billy and I used to sit on the beach. Sometimes he would read to me. I don't think poetry is very interesting, as a rule, but you can think of a great many things and look interested at the same time, and I used to plan my trousseau while he read, but, naturally, we talked a great deal about ourselves, and Billy sometimes would tell me about the places he had been to and the things he had seen, but he would always end by telling me what wonderful eyes and hair I had, and so I didn't really mind, though I always hated books of travel and never can remember where places are on the map.

It was one afternoon on the beach when Billy told me about Mrs. Worthington. There was a sea breeze blowing, and Billy took off his coat to put it around me. I slipped my hands in the pockets and brought out a thick, gray letter. Of course I never meant to. It was directed to Billy in Mrs. Worthington's handwriting and forwarded from some place in Canada.

"Why—why didn't you tell Mrs. Worthington that you were *here*?" I said. "Doesn't she know you didn't go to Canada? Won't you read me her letter?"

I never saw Billy look so annoyed. He tore the letter up in long strips and let them blow down the beach, and explained to me that it was a business letter that wouldn't interest me in the least. He said that he had forgotten to write to Mrs. Worthington that he had given up his trip to Canada. And then he told me what good friends he and Mrs. Worthington's husband had been; that Mrs. Worthington was a lovely woman whom he had always been sorry for, and that they had been good friends for years.

He told me so seriously that you would really think it something very

important, and when I said how perfectly delighted Mrs. Worthington would be to know that he was going to marry a girl to whom she had introduced him herself, he didn't answer for a moment.

He picked up a handful of sand and let it run between his fingers, and presently he laughed—not as though he were laughing at anything funny, but the way mama used to laugh when she told father that she could not possibly live on his income another year.

It was while he was telling me how sad Mrs. Worthington's life was—it seems that she is perfectly devoted to her husband's memory, for he might as well be dead as where he is—and how Mrs. Worthington had always taken such an interest in him (Billy) for her husband's sake, that I made up my mind to bring a little happiness into her life anyway. I may be a silly little thing, but everyone says I have good impulses. I made up my mind then and there that the moment I got to New York I would go to Mrs. Worthington and tell her of my engagement myself and how happy Billy and I were, and all the plans we had made and the lovely dresses I was to have.

We were to go to New York in a day or two, and Billy was going to see his people—he has a mother and two sisters in Boston—and tell them about me, and he made mama promise that we could be married before Christmas. I think he was rather surprised when she agreed with him immediately, but he was perfectly delighted and so was I. I could just imagine what the girls' faces would look like when I told them.

Billy came up to New York with us and put us in a hansom at the station—I hadn't fully realized before all that marrying him would mean, for we always take the Elevated—and told us that he would take the afternoon train to Boston and would certainly be back in three days at the most. He looked so miserable at the thought of leaving me that I would have cried, I think, if it hadn't been for the joy of driving home.

Mama was awfully glad he was going.

She said she would have died with shame if he had seen that machine in the dining-room and now, thank heaven, she would have a chance to sell it to the janitor's wife or give it away.

The girls all came in that afternoon and we made fudge and had a lovely time, and they kissed me and congratulated me and said how they loved me; but I know they were perfectly green with jealousy, and I showed them Billy's picture—the one in his riding things—and they all said he looked exactly like an actor. Altogether it was the loveliest afternoon that I ever spent in my life.

I didn't tell mama the next morning that I was going to call on Mrs. Worthington. I knew she would insist upon going, too, and that would spoil my chance of a cozy chat, and besides there are some things so sacred that your mother would be the last person in the world to tell them to.

Mrs. Worthington's home is beautiful—one of those New York houses that make you think of a thin, blond woman with an aquiline nose. Josephine, Mrs. Worthington's own maid, let me in. She had been at the shore with Mrs. Worthington, and she might have known I would call upon her, but she seemed very much surprised to see me. She showed me into the most beautiful drawing-room though, and said that she would see if Mrs. Worthington was in. I thought she might have been sure at that time in the morning.

While I was sitting there two ladies came down the stairs together. I was looking at a picture near the door and couldn't see them plainly, but I heard one say to the other in the sort of voice you use when you don't move your lips: "She takes it well, doesn't she?" And the other said: "Oh, it's only a rumor, anyway. Freddie got it from a man who knows a man who had heard a man say it at the club." And they laughed and went out.

I was wondering if anything had happened to Mr. Worthington, but just then Josephine came back and said that Mrs. Worthington wanted me to

come to her room, and took me upstairs and tapped on the door and went away.

Mrs. Worthington opened the door herself.

I had meant—at least I had been making up my mind all the way to the house—to put my arms about her neck and kiss her. It seemed, somehow, that I had a right to now, but instead I was so surprised that I just blurted out: "Why, Mrs. Worthington, how ill you look!" before I thought, for she did look dreadful, with big circles under her eyes, and so tired, awfully tired, the way father used to look sometimes when all the bills came in at once.

She had on a wonderful gown, though—all loose and lacy and traily. I made up my mind to have one just like it in my trousseau.

We went into a beautiful room, not her bedroom at all; a sitting-room, I should say, with shelves of books everywhere and white rugs and big, lazy chairs and great jars of roses, and a lovely open fire, and pink silk curtains at the windows.

"Sit here, Muriel," she said, but she didn't sit down herself; she just stood and looked at me until I felt like fidgeting; and then, before I could speak, she smiled and put her hand on my shoulder. It felt cold even through my dress. "And so," she said, "you have come to tell me you are going to marry Billy?"

I was so surprised and disappointed that I almost jumped.

"Why, Mrs. Worthington," I exclaimed, "how in the world did you know? I wanted to tell you myself."

"He wrote me so last night," she said. "I hardly think he imagined we would meet so soon again. Billy is extremely thoughtful."

"Of course," I said, "Billy told me that you were like a sister to him, but I did want to tell you myself." And then I explained to her how I should always thank her for bringing us together and how rapturously happy I was, and all about the day Billy proposed to me, and what he said and what I was going to be married in. Oh, I never enjoyed a talk more!

Mrs. Worthington got up several times and pulled the curtain together and fixed the flowers differently, and once I saw her put her hand to her throat as though something hurt her there, but the smile never left her face a moment. I knew naturally that she was as glad to listen as I was to talk, and I didn't expect her to enthuse the way the girls did—she is not that sort. Well, I talked myself breathless, and when there was absolutely nothing more to say and I began to think that mama might be wondering where I was, Mrs. Worthington drew her chair up to mine and took both my hands in hers and looked at me again as though she had never seen me before.

"Billy's wife!" she said, in that strange way she has of talking as though she were speaking to herself. "You are going to be Billy's wife, and I have been wondering why and have only found out this morning. It is because you are so absolutely and utterly unfitted for each other; because you haven't one thought, one idea or one impulse in common. No, don't be angry, Muriel. I really mean that you are the youngest and the most beautiful girl I ever saw, and that you are blissfully ignorant of the world and its ways and the big and wonderful and terrible things of life. You take love as though it might be a tinsel toy from a Christmas tree. You don't know its value, and so you won't worry about losing it by day or guarding it by night, and consequently you don't lose it. It is only the careful people who lose things."

"Why, Mrs. Worthington!" I said, "I don't understand! What do you mean?"

Mrs. Worthington dropped my hands and laughed. "Of course you don't," she said, "but I am trying to make you see what a fortunate creature you are. Some women, when they love a man, make a life study of the art of pleasing him—poor fools!—his pursuits, his occupations, making their minds kin to his, thinking his very thoughts, reaching both hands

to help him with any burden he may carry, and saying complacently to themselves that they are loved because of it. We simply work ourselves to death for the last favors a man thinks of asking. There are only three things a man asks of a woman, Muriel: that she be always beautiful and perpetually young and never love him as he loves her. When she has mastered these simple problems she need ask nothing of heaven, because there will be nothing left worth the asking. You see I mean that at present you are getting for nothing what wiser women must work their hearts and souls thin for. To be able to give nothing and get everything isn't fair—it's ecstatic."

"Well," I said, "Billy does think I am pretty. He is always telling me so, anyway, and so there is no reason why we shouldn't be perfectly happy."

You see, I wanted Mrs. Worthington to know that I understood her perfectly, though she had rather puzzled me when she said that Billy and I were unsuited to each other. Such nonsense, when he has such quantities of money and Mrs. Worthington had just said herself that a pretty wife was all *any* man wanted. I began to think that perhaps she and Mr. Worthington hadn't been quite so happy together as Billy thought.

Just then a clock somewhere struck twelve, and I knew mama would be furious because the dressmaker was to come that very day and she would charge just as much for sitting and waiting as sewing. Mrs. Worthington didn't ask me to stay for luncheon—I had rather expected she would—but she did a lovely thing instead. She went to a box on her table and drew out the duckiest little string of pearls—they go around my neck twice and clasp with the dearest pearl heart.

"Will you take these for a wedding present, Muriel?" she said. "You see, you are going to be married so quietly" (I wonder how she knew that!) "that I may not be there, and besides I am thinking of going away for a while. I—" She hesitated a moment, and then

went on as though she were speaking to herself again, "I am going to see my husband. You may tell Billy that, if you like. It may amuse him."

Of course I *am* a silly little thing, and I spoke right out before I thought. I couldn't help it. She looked so hungry, famished, somehow, as she spoke, that I said: "Oh, Mrs. Worthington, how you must have loved him!" Do you know, I thought for a moment she was going to strike me. She whirled about quickly. Her eyes were blazing and her mouth was trembling and her face is always so quiet, so reposeful. It was exactly as though she had taken off a mask.

"What do you mean?" she said. "Loved whom?"

"Why, your husband, of course, Mrs. Worthington," I said. "Whom should I mean?"

She looked at me a moment as though she didn't believe me, and then her face changed, and after a moment she laughed. I have heard people laugh that way on the stage.

"Of course, my dear," she said. "I didn't quite understand you. I didn't mean to frighten you. I'm a bit nervous this morning, and the aged are sometimes hard of hearing." And she laughed again and so did I—not that I knew what in the world she meant, but to be polite. I told her again how awfully sorry I was she couldn't be at the wedding, for really it would have read awfully well in the papers.

"Do you know, Mrs. Worthington," I said, "you haven't given me a bit of advice. I thought perhaps you would. You know everything, I think, and I would like to tell Billy what you say—I really would."

"I have given you the best advice in the world, Muriel," she said, "absolutely the best. Keep young and beautiful and never love too much."

I hadn't meant anything out of a book like that. I thought she would tell me about the gowns and hats I would need traveling and things of that kind, but she always was strange, and so I thanked her and held out my hand

to say good-bye. Instead, she took both my hands and looked down in my face—she is much taller than I am—for a full moment before she spoke, and, tired and ill as she was, I think I never saw her eyes so wonderful.

"Tell Billy," she said, "that I won't bother him by answering his letter, and tell him that I said to you that I pray and hope for his happiness, as I have always done, and that I shall always pray and hope for it." And then, before I could answer, she kissed me very lightly on the forehead. "Good-bye," she said, and she smiled at me again as she had when I came in. "I don't have to wish you happiness, Muriel, because I know that you never can know what it means to be unhappy.

Good-bye, and remember to keep young and beautiful always. Those are the only important things in life."

I looked back once as I went down the stairs, but Mrs. Worthington had closed the door. When I thought it over on the way home, it seemed to me that, after all, Mrs. Worthington might have been a little nicer to me. I really had expected her to ask me to stay with her for a day or so before I was married and have Billy for dinner and luncheon, but I suppose that women in society like Mrs. Worthington lead selfish lives and think only of themselves and not what pleasure they can give other people. And anyway, the pearls are perfectly beautiful. I am wild to show them to Billy.



PROVING THE NEGATIVE

TO indicate the full extent of passion
All sorts of signs and metaphors we use—
Analogies flock to us, in such fashion,

'Tis but a question where and which to choose
To voice Love's spell, with eloquent persistence,
But ah! to fitly tell its non-existence!

I do not love you. I've no wish, no yearning
To call you mine . . . I know too well your lacks!
The very thought of you my soul is spurning—
To me, in fact, if you were made of wax,
Or wood, or rubber, tin, or chalk, or batter,
Less than you matter now you could not matter!

Mark how inadequate, how words here fail us!
Methinks great nothingness, and nothing less
Could, in this unexampled strait, alone, avail us—
The wide and all-embracing emptiness
Of that vast measureless world, as yet unchristen'd,
The everywhere Love is not when it isn't!

MADELINE BRIDGES.



AVOID personalities, except when talking to a pretty woman. In that case avoid everything else.

A MAN AND TWO WOMEN

By Johnson White

DR. JAMIESON walked through the café of the club, and was discouraged. He ascended the stairs to the reading-room, and was disgusted. As a last resort he looked into the drawing-room, and was in despair. Of the few scattered members about he knew only six, and them he loathed—some for their virtues, others for their vices.

As he stood in the hall, scowling at Auston, the millionaire, who was laughing at a story and shaking his fat sides in calf's-foot jelly fashion, Dr. Jamieson had an inspiration. He motioned to the porter for his hat and coat.

"I'll go across to Delmonico's," he muttered. "At least there'll be some pretty women to cheer my loneliness. I rather think I'll see somebody prettier than old 'Putty' Auston to look at. Gad! the club is getting as empty week-ends as London itself."

"Hello, Doc," Auston called, as the porter held up Jamieson's overcoat; "come here a minute till I tell you the best—"

"Sorry—late for an engagement," the other lied glibly, and hurried out of the club.

It is in such simple fashion that Fate introduces one to epochs in his destiny.

In the supper-room at Delmonico's Jamieson found the usual crowd.

As he seated himself at a corner table he scowled again, for he saw no promise of genial companionship. Two or three persons nodded to him from nearby tables, but with none of them was he sufficiently intimate to do more than exchange formal saluta-

tions. It seemed to him that he was destined to an evening of boredom.

"Confound it," he thought, "I'd better go home and study formalin. These be dinky days—these Sundays in New York. Yes, I'll toddle homeward, and improve my brain if not my spirits."

Jamieson had ordered a glass of Scotch. Now the waiter brought the bottle and glasses. Jamieson poured out a small measure and emptied it over the ice in the big glass. Then he frowned over the room again, while the waiter poured the aerated water.

A moment later he raised the glass to his lips. As he drank he stared unseeing over the tumbler's rim. Suddenly, he set down the glass. His gaze had fallen on a woman two tables away, facing him. On her his glance remained—became a stare. Luckily she was not regarding him, so he was able to look again without offense. A soft warmth crept through him, his heart-beat quickened. From his mood of dissatisfaction with himself and all things his emotion passed to quiet delight—a delight drawn wholly from the beauty of that woman.

Indeed, Jamieson was justified, for the woman was of superb loveliness. She was evidently tall, and her figure was perfect, that of a Juno, made more lithe and enticing by her modiste, for the gown clung lovingly to the gracious curves and emphasized their charm. But it was the face toward which Jamieson held fixed eyes. It was like a flower, but a flower blossomed to the greatest splendor. In the cheeks was a rich glow of red blood that showed again from the

pouting carmine lips, while all the rest was a living cream color, save where the jewel eyes shone beneath dark lashes. Above the low brow rose a coronet of dusky coils that gave the imperial air the woman's beauty deserved. And when she smiled an adorable dimple winked in the satin of her cheeks and a gleam of pearl shone from between the ripe lips.

Jamieson studied her with keen joy—she was so complete, so vital, so beautiful in all ways. It seemed to him that magnetic currents flowed from her directly to him, currents that wrapped him in a rose mantle of pleasure.

He interrupted his enthusiasm enough to examine the other members of the party, who were only two, a man and a girl. The girl, too, was beautiful, but in a budding coolness of beauty that pleased without disturbing. She seemed rather serious, yet her face was sweet. It was perhaps the regularity of their outlines that gave the features a certain gravity in repose. But the delicate lips were fresh and curved, the teeth pearl, and the blue eyes mirrored many moods. She was perhaps not so tall as her companion, yet her slenderer form was full of grace and held in its lines a promise of rich maturity.

But Jamieson did not linger in his contemplation of the girl. Just now the only woman to compel his attention was the ravishing vision on whom again he turned his eyes. Then, as she looked in his direction, he shifted his glance hastily to the man in the party. Here he received a distinct shock—the man was drunk.

There was no mistake possible. The man was drunk, even very drunk.

Jamieson looked from him back to the woman, and now noticed what had escaped his attention hitherto—that there was a slightly strained look about the brilliant eyes and smiling mouth, as if a secret worry were masked by her art of expression. In the girl the same forced disguise of a secret feeling was conspicuous, now that he searched for it. Jamieson felt a momentary

thrill of self-criticism that he, a physician, had allowed these evidences to pass unnoticed on his first survey of the two women. Yes, they were alarmed, although they strove pitifully to conceal the fact, and their apprehension was justified.

For the man was constantly showing increased signs of his intoxication. As Jamieson stared at him he raised his champagne glass to his lips. The woman placed her hand appealingly on his arm, the girl whispered a word, but the man only scowled by way of response, and tossed down the wine at one gulp. A moment afterward he rose unsteadily from his chair and started toward the vestibule. His jostling movement upset the glass he had left on a corner of the table, and it fell to the floor with a tinkling crash. Many who sat near turned at the sound and looked to see the cause. The two women flushed under the many inquiring eyes, and the man himself seemed for a moment to realize his position, and evidently strove to assume a sobriety he did not possess as he walked toward the door.

However, he managed well enough so that his passage only provoked a few smiles, quite without excitement.

At this moment Williams, the head-waiter, paused by Jamieson's table for a greeting, and remained speaking of various patrons who were out of the city.

Suddenly, a waiter approached Williams and whispered to him. Then the two went out hurriedly into the vestibule.

As Jamieson turned his gaze again in the direction of the table where his interest had centered he was addressed by another waiter, who said, in a low voice:

"If you please, sir, Dr. Jamieson, you are wanted, sir."

Jamieson went out quickly, and in the vestibule found a small group of patrons and servants clustered around the prostrate body of a man on the floor. A single glance served to identify him as the drunken escort of the two ladies.

Jamieson knelt by the man, and found that he was suffering from collapse. It took only a second to see that it would be impossible to restore him to consciousness for some time.

Jamieson gave his orders crisply to the porter.

"Get a four-wheeler and lift him in. Have a waiter go with us—I shall see the man to his own place. By the time you are ready to start I'll have the address. Hurry!"

Jamieson turned away and went back into the restaurant. There he went directly to the table where sat the two ladies. He addressed the elder:

"Madam—there is no occasion for alarm, but the gentleman who was with you is somewhat ill. It is not serious, but he should be taken home at once. I have had him put in a carriage, and shall go with him and see him comfortably resting before I leave him. If you will give me the address, please—I am a physician."

There was a little exclamation from the woman, a swift glance exchanged with the girl. Then she answered quietly:

"We are very grateful to you. The address is No. 14½ East Sixty-third street. I cannot thank you—now."

She flashed on him one look from the wonderful eyes, and Jamieson thrilled with delight. He rejoiced that anything, even a catastrophe, had brought him the opportunity of speaking to her.

"And you must let me see you safely on your way," he added.

"Yes, I should be at home before my husband reaches there, to receive him," she replied.

Her husband! The words cut Jamieson to the soul. It was a profanation that the drunken wretch should be the husband of this glorious creature. But this was no time for regrets. He choked down his feeling and made sure that the sick man had been removed to the carriage, which only waited for the doctor himself before proceeding. At once he returned to the ladies and escorted them to a hansom.

"I shall arrive only a minute behind you," he said, and gave their address to the driver.

Again in the vestibule, Williams spoke to him.

"It's Mr. Hunt. He's getting worse and worse on the drinking, sir. I've seen him drunk before—often; but never with his wife along. It shows he's getting worse, sir."

Jamieson agreed, with a swift shudder of disgust, and hurried to the carriage in which Hunt lay stretched out, supported by a waiter.

At the door of No. 14½ East Sixty-third street he was met by a quiet valet, who evidently knew the necessities of the case.

"It's no use troubling you, Dr.—" He paused inquiringly.

"Dr. Jamieson."

"Well, sir, it's not necessary to bother you, Dr. Jamieson. You see, sir, I'm used to these spells of Mr. Hunt's—he has them often." And the emphasis on the "often" was fraught with significance.

Jamieson believed from the manner of the man that he did indeed understand his business, and as another manservant now descended the steps to aid in carrying the master of the house within, he resigned his charge and drove away.

"I suppose I shall never see her again," he thought, and a great loneliness fell on him and lay like a pall.

For a week Dr. Jamieson carried about with him a tantalizing memory of beauty. But it was only a memory. He made some cautious inquiries concerning the Hunts—quite without success. Evidently they went out but little; no one seemed to know them. Whatever their social life, it was in a set distinct from his own. He could hit on no means of meeting again the woman who had so fascinated him.

It is only fair to Jamieson to state that he realized the danger of this sudden interest in a woman who was the wife of another. The effect of his single interview with her—a few long looks, a half-dozen words—was so

powerful that he understood fully the peril of closer association. Over and over he vowed he would make no effort to meet her again, since she could never lawfully be anything to him. But, while he vowed, his heart was burning toward her, and at every opportunity he strove to find someone who could take him to her. And this struggle between right as taught by reason and necessity as taught by his emotions was constant and severe, so that it wore on Jamieson's nerves, and for the first time in his life he found himself waking up in the night, to lie with staring eyes for hours, restless, unhappy. For Jamieson, fashionable physician and clubman as he was, was yet a very wholesome man with certain clean instincts, which as yet he had never outraged, despite the manifold temptations of his life. So now, to his other perplexities was added the rack of misery that came from the assaults of his passions on his self-respect. He felt that he should put this woman absolutely out of his thoughts and out of his heart. And since he could not eject her from the latter, she remained dominant in the former. He began to despise himself for the weakness his sudden infatuation had engendered. And his self-contempt was increased by the feebleness of his will, which ordered him to make no effort to meet the woman again, and yet could not restrain him from making inquiries about her of any chance acquaintance.

It was while Jamieson was in this mood of desire and disgust that opportunity came to him.

He was just preparing to leave his apartments one afternoon when his servant brought a card which bore the name: Mr. Arthur Sillerly Hunt.

A wave of color flowed over the smooth-shaven, alert face of Jamieson as he read. An odd sense of guilt stirred in him at the idea of meeting this husband, whom in his thoughts he wronged by cherishing a forbidden fondness for the wife. He had no doubt that this was the husband; he felt that he could not be mistaken.

But he threw off the uncomfortable oppression and bade the servant show the gentleman in. In a moment, memory summoned a picture of the drunkard as he had seen him at Delmonico's, and a quick disgust succeeded the sense of guilt.

Then the man entered, and Jamieson went forward to greet him.

Mr. Hunt paused in some constraint, and spoke with much hesitation.

"I cannot remember you, Dr. Jamieson, but I am sure that my information is correct. You did me a great service a short time ago; I wish to thank you, sir. I should have done so sooner, but I have been—ill."

The visitor spoke with heavy formality, but Jamieson realized that this was due probably to embarrassment. Somehow, as he listened, the doctor's contempt for the man faded, and he felt a little thrill of admiration for one who could come to perform a task of gratitude that must be humiliating in the extreme. Also, he wondered quickly as to whether this call from Hunt might have been prompted by the woman. Surely she had more cause for gratitude than had her husband, since someone must have cared for him in any event, while in her case only the physician's thoughtfulness had saved her from a most distressing situation.

But now Jamieson spoke quietly, in answer to his guest:

"I was glad to be of service to you. It was hardly of enough importance to deserve thanks. Do not mention it again, I beg of you."

"In spite of what you say," Hunt returned, "I know that you must appreciate my feeling in the matter. As you do, I do not need to repeat the fact of my gratitude, and I shall not. But I had something else I wished to say." He paused doubtfully.

"Please sit down," said Jamieson, with a gesture toward an easy-chair. "I am quite at your service."

"But you were going out?" Hunt suggested, for Jamieson still held in his hands the walking-gloves he had picked up before his visitor was announced.

"Only to the club; a little earlier or a little later makes not the slightest difference. I have no engagement before dinner."

Hunt seated himself, and Jamieson took a chair facing him. There was a silence between the two men, while Hunt seemed plunged in moody thought, meditating his words. When at last he spoke it was with a vehemence very much unlike his previous hesitating manner.

"I am a drunkard, a habitual drunkard, growing worse day after day. It's been growing on me for years, and now I am wholly, absolutely, hopelessly in the clutches of the vice. I'm only half-alive unless I've drunk quantities of raw spirits, and once I begin drinking I can't stop until I am stupefied. I am a drunken sot—my will power has gone. I've lost my friends, everything. I don't know where to turn. I can't help myself—the curse is stronger than I am. Can you help me? Can anyone, or anything, help me? If there's anything that can help me to conquer this degradation, for God's sake, tell me—anything, anything!"

Jamieson was distressed and perplexed. The despair of Hunt's confession took him by surprise and aroused his compassion. He knew, as a medical man, the resistless power of alcoholic disease, and he realized that here was a victim of dipsomania he could not doubt. The fact that the sufferer fully understood his case was both favorable and unfavorable for the hope of a cure. It was well that he should understand the seriousness of his state; it was not well that he should be thus hopeless of his own ability to control an abnormal craving.

When Hunt paused Jamieson did not answer for a time. Then he spoke with some uncertainty.

"Of course I can't make light of a statement like yours. I do believe that something can be done for you. But it depends chiefly on you. I don't know that I think much of drugs to help a case like yours. But some other stimulants in place of alcohol for a time, and a rigid following of certain

rules I should give you, ought to work a cure. And, above all, don't let yourself think that you *must* drink. Wait and see. I'll do all I can to help you."

"Thank you," Hunt said, and there was something almost like hope in his voice. "I'll try my best to do just as you say. I don't want to destroy myself."

The two men began a discussion which lasted for nearly half an hour. In it Jamieson forgot that this patient was the husband of the woman who had so stirred his heart; he became wholly the physician. It was only a chance remark of Hunt's at the last that recalled her.

"I might have made a better fight of it if I'd had a different wife. She's never helped me; her influence has been bad for me."

It was the confidential utterance of a patient to his physician, but it filled Jamieson with anger, so that he had hard work to keep back the rebuke that rose to his lips.

But Hunt did not pause for any comment on his words. He continued, quite unconscious that he had disturbed his listener in any way.

"We should be very glad if you would dine with us any evening next week, just quietly—no others; only my wife and niece. Mrs. Hunt will send you a note if you have a free evening."

Jamieson forgot his gust of anger in his delight at an opportunity of again seeing Mrs. Hunt. He consulted his engagement-book.

"Would next Thursday suit you?" he asked, and tried hard to keep the eagerness out of his voice.

"Perfectly," Hunt answered. "You will have a line from Mrs. Hunt in the morning. And I shall see you before then, as arranged."

A moment more and the visitor had departed. Jamieson was left alone with a heart full of guilty happiness; he would see her again!

At the dinner Jamieson found himself in heaven, for he was screened from Miss Harman, the niece, who sat

opposite him, by the centrepiece of flowers, and thus free to turn many eager glances toward his hostess, who sat at his left. Mr. Hunt, too, chatted much with his niece, of whom he seemed very fond, so that Jamieson was able to devote himself almost exclusively to the woman he so greatly admired.

Now that he was again in her presence, the beauty and grace of the woman dominated him. He found that the memory of her which he had carried since he first saw her at Delmonico's had been only a tawdry caricature of her wonderful loveliness. He gazed at her with a delight he could not wholly conceal, though he disguised it so that none but a close observer would have known it to be anything beyond respectful admiration. But Jamieson knew, and the knowledge was joy and sorrow mingled—joy for the sake of her beauty and grace; sorrow over the fact that the splendid woman was held apart from him by conventional barriers. And now that he was able to speak with her at his ease he found her mind as delightful as her physical charms. Whether he chatted with her the usual small talk of a dinner table or now and then ventured to a deeper utterance, something more personal and more significant, in each and every case she listened with intelligent interest and answered with quick sympathy. Jamieson thought that never before had he heard a woman laugh with such rippling music in her tones; never had he seen such glorious eyes that shone with her smiles or grew tenderly lustrous in her more serious moods. In short, he found in her a realization of the feminine that was far beyond any ideal he had ever been able to create for himself.

Doubtless Mrs. Hunt perceived the love he strove to hide, for she looked on him very kindly, and responded to his varying phases of feeling with a delicacy and completeness that enraptured him. In his subjection to his hostess's fascination he forgot everything but her and his feeling toward

her, so that it came on him as a shock when the two ladies left the table and he found himself alone with Hunt.

Hunt, who had drunk heavily of the wine at dinner, now began a hurried conversation with his guest.

"You must talk with my niece when we go into the drawing-room. She is a wonderful girl. She is good without being namby-pamby, and beautiful as she is good. Did you notice her profile?"

"Why, no," Jamieson answered, with some confusion, "I didn't observe it particularly. But, of course, she's—ah—very beautiful."

"She is indeed," Hunt rejoined warmly. "And she helps a man. There's an atmosphere about her that makes one, while he's with her, want to be better, you know. That sounds like rot, but it isn't, by Jove! I never got drunk when she was present but once in my life, and that was the other night. And then, you see, I was too far gone when I came home to take them out to be able to stop. And I think her being there when I'd lost my self-control just helped to make me all the more reckless, understand?"

"Why, yes, I think so," Jamieson said. "But see here, don't drink any brandy tonight, Hunt; you feel all right now, don't you?"

"Yes, capital."

"Well, leave it at that—nothing more. If you get restless by and bye go to bed. I've brought you a powder to make you sleep," and the physician extended a folded paper.

"I agree," said Hunt. "Do you know, doctor, I think you are helping me. I feel stronger—physically and morally."

"Oh, you'll pull up in a short time," Jamieson said cheerfully. "Just use a little horse-sense—use it before you've drunk too much, that's all."

"Right!" Hunt agreed. "And now let's go to the ladies. I want you to have a chat with my niece."

"I shall be delighted," the guest answered. But in his heart he raged against this delay that kept him from his hostess's side.

But when he came to talk with the girl he forgot his indignation. She was, in truth, altogether charming. And, too, he fell under the spell of that mysterious emanation of which Hunt had spoken. She was in no way obtrusively good. That was the last way of describing her. But there was about her an atmosphere of wholesomeness, of quiet but insistent purity that was magical in its effect. She talked easily and well of the ordinary topics—the theatres, balls, books, the Subway—but in the gentle notes was a singular sweetness that was like a spiritual music, and her eyes were clear and steadfast when she looked at Jamieson, so that he felt himself ashamed, without knowing why, until he remembered Mrs. Hunt. Then he was filled with self-loathing, and knew why.

Still, the girl's influence was of only a moment's duration. When he was able again to sit beside the older woman the glamour fell on him instantly, and remained.

"Will you be able to help him?" She spoke softly, and glanced in the direction of her husband, who sat some distance away.

"Yes, I think so," Jamieson said cautiously. "But, after all, you know, the issue depends entirely on himself."

"Ah, yes; I know," Mrs. Hunt murmured very low. "I know, and that is why I fear." And a little later she became more confidential. "Oh, I beg of you, Dr. Jamieson, do all—everything in your power to reclaim him. You cannot know what it means to me."

"I can imagine your suffering," he answered. Then, in an impulse of tenderness that he could not restrain, he added: "I would do anything—everything—to help you."

He paused, aghast at his unmediated daring, afraid that he had offended her past forgiveness, for he knew that he had not hidden the desire of his thoughts; he knew that his voice had thrilled with passion. He dropped his eyes and waited, fearfully, for the sentence and haughty rebuke.

There was a long moment of silence. Then there came, breathed so softly that they but just reached his ear, two words, gentle, sweet: "Thank you."

Dr. Jamieson looked up in quick wonder and delight. Joy filled his heart as he realized that he had not angered her, that indeed he had given her pleasure. Surely there was a little smile at the corners of the pouting, scarlet lips; surely there was a beaming light of gratitude in the wonderful eyes.

For a moment his gaze met hers and lingered. A slight blush added to the loveliness of her cheek, and she sighed.

And Jamieson echoed her sigh as her eyes at last fell, but his was a sigh of bliss.

This was all very well—for the moment. But later, that same night, when he was alone in his apartment, Jamieson's mood changed.

From a dream of rapture that had endured for an hour, an interval of feeling that was without analysis, just delight, he now awoke to the reality, and the waking was not pleasant.

For, as has been said, Jamieson was not a vicious man. It was a new experience for him, this infatuation for a married woman. And while many of his companions looked on such sport as the most gentlemanly of pastimes, Jamieson was honest enough to admit the criminality of an action that must corrupt the woman and might involve an innocent husband and children in the worst shame. Unfortunately, in this instance, his love of the woman was stronger than his principles, and it was this fact that filled him with distress. The very strangeness of the affair worried him. He could not understand why his subjection had been so instantaneous and so complete. He was an able reasoner, a close observer, but in his study of himself now he failed to understand that the charm put on him must of necessity be superficial as yet, whatever it might develop into. His senses had been so enthralled that his spirit, too, was subject to the spell, for his imagination at-

tributed to the sorceress every virtue of mind and soul as the fountain-heads of that mysterious magnetism that drew him to her. But in his self-communings he saw clearly that all her loveliness, her worth—which he never questioned—did not excuse his seeking her. Though he loved, he had no right to bask in the sunlight of her tenderness. The words he had spoken that night had been almost a confession of love, and he had no right even to hint to her of his passion. Jamieson cursed himself, blessed the woman, and vowed that for the future he would control himself when necessity took him into her presence, that he would avoid that dangerous presence whenever he might without offense. As he fell asleep he had a confused picture of Hunt, who trusted him, of the wife whom he loved, and, last of all, the girl, who looked with clear, steadfast eyes into his very soul; and in her look were reproach and pity.

The next morning Jamieson's first thought was of Mrs. Hunt; his second was that he must not see her again. But while he was at breakfast he was called to the telephone, and behold, she was asking him to go to the Horse Show with them that evening. With delight he accepted. It was only after he had hung up the receiver that he remembered his resolution. Alone as he was, he blushed for shame at his weakness. Nevertheless, it did not occur to him to make any effort to break the engagement.

And then a reaction came to his strivings after virtue. Well, if he was to be with her, at least let him enjoy the opportunity for happiness—dismiss care and scruples, and delight in the short moments of her society. Instantly regrets were swept away, and he was warm with eager anticipations of the evening.

They were more than realized. When Hunt suggested to his wife a stroll around the oval she refused, on the plea of fatigue, and sent the girl in her place. Jamieson remained to keep her company. When they were alone he spoke to her in a low voice.

"Tell me you have forgiven me for my boldness last night."

"Your boldness? I did not think you bold—at least, not too bold."

Her eyes flashed into his, and his pulses leaped at the caressing softness of her tones, the glance, the significance of her answer. He was throbbing with desire to take her in his arms. The red curve of her lips maddened him, the white column of her throat, the little tendrils of hair that clung about her forehead, filled him with a yearning that was physical anguish. He could not conceal his emotion.

"You forgive me—oh, if you could only forgive all I would say. I—I—you must not think me foolish—I never talked to another woman like this." Here, for a wonder, he spoke truth. "But no other woman ever stirred me so deeply. You are so wonderful! You are—oh, all that is worth while—roses and moonlight and dreams of romance. You are the one thing in the universe that really amounts to anything. You sum it all up in you—you are—love. Forgive me, I know I should not say such things to you, but I can't help it. Really I can't! Good heavens, I thought I could manage myself, but you have bowled me over—I don't mean any insult to you. I love you too much not to respect you. No doubt you think I've gone daft, for remember, I've only seen you twice before; yet it seems as if I'd known you, longed for you always. Say that you are not angry with me. It's just that my love is stronger than I am."

"I am not angry."

Jamieson's hand moved swiftly and clasped hers beneath the shelter of her cloak. The glow of the contact was like a draught of wine. His fingers closed fondly on hers, and hers returned the pressure very delicately. But the slight response filled the man with a tingling happiness beyond anything he had ever felt before. For a little time they remained silent. It was she who spoke first.

"You must forgive me—for I have been bold." He would have interrupted, but she checked him. "Yes,

I have been bold, and that is a fault in a woman, though it is a virtue in a man. But my excuse is—I—I believe in—love at first sight."

"And I," Jamieson murmured, "I, too, believe in it—for I know by experience—now."

She looked at him from beneath drooping lids.

"Do you forgive me?"

"Forgive you! The question is blasphemy. Why, I love you!"

Their eyes met and lingered as in a caress of their two souls.

Jamieson shuddered.

"To think that I must ever leave you—even for a moment!" he said despairingly.

"To think of what life might be—and of what it is," Mrs. Hunt retorted bitterly.

Jamieson made no reply. The words called up the thought of stern facts. He remembered that he had a patient, one Hunt, who was the husband of the woman beside him, and the thought was agony.

Always afterward the rest of that evening was like a dream to Jamieson.

When Hunt returned he insisted that the doctor should go with him to look at some of the horses, but instead of fulfilling this purpose he went into the café and, sitting down at one of the tables, ordered brandy and soda. Jamieson remonstrated in vain. He had already drunk just enough to be regardless of advice. And, too, he was in an ugly mood, which he explained.

"It's my wife's fault," he declared savagely. "You won't believe it, of course. She looks like an angel, doesn't she?" with a sneer. "But she's a long way from it, and I know! And yet she treats me like a dog. You saw her tonight. I asked her to walk with me. She was too tired! And I know she's not—she is never tired, except when I want her company. Yes, I could quit drinking if she'd help me—give me something to live for. But she won't—not she!"

The querulous tones racked Jamieson. At first he was angry, then a bit

of pity stirred in him. The husband was doubtless in love with his wife; but she certainly could not be in love with him, so he must suffer, and Jamieson was sorry for him on that account.

Hunt was finally induced to return to the box, and there somewhat to Jamieson's embarrassment Mrs. Hunt suggested a stroll to him.

"You are not tired now?" her husband questioned, with poorly concealed sarcasm.

"No, I am quite rested after sitting so long," Mrs. Hunt replied. And Jamieson was filled with contrition that he had allowed the husband's words to make him unjust for one instant to this adorable woman.

But at this hour the crowd around the arena was at its thickest, and just at the entrance they were caught for five minutes by the swaying mass, and thrust hither and thither helplessly.

"Oh, get me out, please, please!" Mrs. Hunt gasped, and Jamieson saw that the struggle was fatiguing her. The nearest road to escape was into the vestibule, and toward it he forced a way for them, though slowly and painfully. At last, however, they broke from the crowd into the open place, and Mrs. Hunt almost sobbed in the joy of escape.

"Oh, it was awful, awful!" she cried. "I wouldn't go through it again for anything in the world. Ah, you are so strong!" and she looked up admiringly at the physician's lithe, muscular form.

Jamieson was filled with pleasure mixed with embarrassment. To cover his confusion he spoke of their return.

"But I can't go back," Mrs. Hunt protested. "And you must not leave me. I'm too nervous—I could not bear to have you go. No, no, you must take me home. Yes, please. Then you can come back and tell Mr. Hunt."

During the swift drive to her house they were both silent. Jamieson's thoughts were in a whirl. He left her at her door, though it was a torture to turn from her, and drove back to Madison Square. When he at last

pushed his way through the throng and came to the box he found the girl alone and distraught.

"Oh," she cried, "I'm so glad you've come. Mr. Hunt—oh, I can't bear to speak of it!—but he's—he's—"

Jamieson needed no more. The girl's great distress awoke him from his rosy dreams; he understood at once.

"Where is he now?" he asked. "I understand. Please, you mustn't worry. I'll look for him," and he went away hastily.

The search was vain. In the end Jamieson was forced to leave word with an attendant, in case Hunt returned, that his party had gone home.

"Perhaps he has forgotten us and gone home," the girl suggested as Jamieson helped her into the carriage; but there was no hope in her voice.

And when they reached the house their fears were realized. The girl left Jamieson in the drawing-room while she went to inquire. He had waited a few moments when Mrs. Hunt entered the room and came to him with outstretched hands.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you again," she said softly. Then, "No, he has not come in," in answer to Jamieson's look of interrogation.

"I shall go out and try to run across him," the physician suggested; but his eyes spoke very different words as he gazed down on the loveliness of the face so close to his own, and he was trembling with the passion the touch of her warm hand provoked, for it still lay in his.

And then he forgot scruples and even prudence, and bent his head and kissed the curved lips—a long, long kiss of delight, that was rudely interrupted by a gasp of amazement. The two sprang guiltily apart, for the girl stood before them staring with amazed, accusing eyes.

For a long minute there was absolute silence. It was broken by the girl, who spoke very low, but with an emphasis of horror.

"Oh, go, go; please go!"

Without a word Jamieson turned and went out, leaving the two women standing there.

All Jamieson's scruples had been as nothing in power compared to the effect of that look of loathing in the girl's eyes. There he read a just valuation of his conduct, without any extenuation from ingenious sophistries. Jamieson remembered his conversations with the girl; in addition to beauty, she possessed intelligence and much feeling. He could close his eyes and see her as she had stared at him in horror; and by the use of his rather vivid imagination he could understand in a measure how heinous his conduct must seem to her pure soul. And at such a time—Jamieson groaned in new disgust for himself.

But usually when he had arrived at the highest pitch of self-accusation the reaction would come. He would feel again the tingling softness of the woman's lips, and his nature thrilled with longing to fly to her, to be with her always, always.

For three days Jamieson heard nothing from any one of the three. Then one day, as he came into his apartments to dress for the evening, he was confronted by a miserable figure huddled in his favorite chair. It took a second glance to recognize in this battered and unkempt object his patient, Hunt.

Evidently Hunt had been on a fearful debauch, and as evidently he had come directly to his physician at the moment of collapse. "As sensible at the last as he was mad at the beginning," Jamieson thought.

It was useless to ask questions. Hunt was almost unconscious. It was a wonder how the man ever managed to find his way to any desired point. Jamieson made a hasty examination, and as it proceeded his face grew very serious. Then he made a second and very careful examination of his patient's heart. And when he had done, "Just one more spree will kill the man—no shadow of doubt!" was his verdict. "As it is, it'll be a job to pull him through this time."

And then Jamieson's face went white. It flashed on him what it would mean to him—to her—were Hunt to die!

Then began a battle between the powers of good and evil in the man's soul. All the force of his love for the beautiful woman urged him to this crime. It was such a negative crime! He had nothing to do—nothing! only to remain passive, to let the man work his own will—let him drink just once more, then die. And afterward, the woman would be free, free for his wooing, for his winning, free for his own before the eyes of all the world. And the man was so useless! A mere wreck, whose existence was a hateful thing to himself and his. It were better for the world and for himself that he should die. The happiness of two hung on his life—and his life was useless—worse than useless! It would be such a little crime, Jamieson thought fiercely, such a tiny, tiny crime!

Then there came into his meditations a memory of the girl's face, with the pure eyes that looked at him with amazement and horror. Beneath that look the savage frenzy in Jamieson's mood quieted, cowered, slunk away. With a sudden reaction toward righteousness, he cried out sharply:

"No, no, I was mad! I never——"

He broke off abruptly, and busied himself with his patient.

"I shall keep him here—and do my best for him," Jamieson muttered. "It might be dangerous to move him. And I'll keep him from drink for a time, anyhow."

When, an hour later, Jamieson had his patient resting quietly he set out to inform Mrs. Hunt of her husband's whereabouts.

It was the first time he had seen her since he had walked shamed-faced from her presence at the girl's bidding, and he was keenly sensitive to the magnetic charm of her presence, but he held himself in check while he spoke to her of her husband.

"And when will you send him here?" she asked.

"Not for some time," he answered. "He ought not to be moved."

He told her of the diseased heart and the danger to her husband's life.

"You will need to guard him very carefully, then?" she questioned.

"It is a matter of life and death," Jamieson replied.

She came closer and put her two hands in his, and her eyes were like stars.

"Do not tire yourself out, dear," she said softly. "Your life is more important than his; your happiness is worth—is worth more than—anything else."

A horrible fear clutched at Jamieson's heart. But no, she could not mean——

He looked into the beautiful eyes that were like stars, and his conscience smote him. He had been so full of the thought of crime that he had insulted this fair and noble woman by thinking it possible that she——

But now again the woman spoke, softly, tenderly.

"You know that I love you—you are everything to me; he is nothing. Oh, if I could only be yours—oh, if he should die!"

The woman's lips rose to his and touched them; and her eyes, like stars, told him her meaning.

The man drew away from her caress—and hated her.

In the doctor's apartment that night Hunt, delirious, babbled of his wife's lovers, with whom she played only to cast them aside when she wearied, and the raging husband besought curses on the woman.

And Jamieson, sitting by the man's bedside, listened, sick at heart. A great desire grew in his soul that some time, somewhere, he might see the girl once more, see her and plead for pardon!



THE SERENADE

BENEATH her latticed casement,
 He sings a sad refrain,
 The cry to battle calls him,
 He ne'er may come again.

The plaintive notes, ascending,
 Assail milady's ears,
 And, at the open window,
 Her lovely face appears.

The music swells still louder,
 She lifts her arm—whereat,
 The bootjack swift descending
 Knocks out the Thomas cat.

McLANDBURGH WILSON.



A GREAT INCENTIVE

HE—I suppose Miss de Millions married that poor young artist because she loved him.

SHE—No; because her dearest friend loved him.



SUITABLE

PARKE—I want a motto to put in my cook's room.

LANE—How would “for transients only” do?



CONVENIENT

ST. PETER—Look here, you had a lot of bad habits on earth.

NEW ARRIVAL—That's all right. I had them all checked at the door.

THE WISDOM OF A SATYR

By Mabel Lakin Patterson

A YOUNG Faun, whose life had been lived in the depth of a beautiful forest, fell deeply in love with a gay little Nymph. At first she resented his attentions with shy pleasure, and it was evident she found enjoyment in his marked preference for her. Thus encouraged his ardor knew no bounds. He wove the most marvelous wreaths for her brow and brought bird wings that gleamed with lustre like many jewels.

He would have danced whole evenings with her alone had it not been for a certain wilfulness on her part. It was impossible for him not to observe that her wilfulness increased rather than diminished the more certain she became of his enamoured condition, and although he labored with her earnestly, setting forth his love and devotion, he could not induce her to renounce entirely numerous faun companions and devote herself to him exclusively.

"Why," she would say naïvely, "I have known them always, I think; at any rate, I cannot remember when I did not know them, and I like them very well. Before you came I never cared for anyone else. I do not wish to slight my friends, as you seem to desire. They would be displeased. I've never asked you to confine your attentions wholly to me. I wish you wouldn't. I'd much rather you would disport yourself a little more. We have always disported ourselves," she would continue, shaking out her golden fleece of hair, "and it's likely we always will. And then, now we have the subject in hand, I wish you would stop glowering at me from behind the trees when I'm

dancing with others. You look ridiculous."

It was unbearable to be talked to like this, yet it always happened so. He could not bring her to a sense of her wrongdoing.

As time went on matters grew worse. Sometimes she would not listen at all to his remonstrances, but, tripping lightly away with her fingers in her ears, she would flee with ripples of laughter floating back to him.

Often she failed to return for hours, when, peeping mischievously at him, she would ask: "Are you here yet? I was afraid you had gone away somewhere, on a trip to lecture. I'm sure you ought to, for you would be a great success."

After which perhaps she would slip her slender fingers in his, and he would be wondrously happy and, at the same time, wretched, for he knew the same thing would happen again, only with variations.

In despair he betook himself to a satyr, for satyrs are very wise when they are not intoxicated. He laid the whole sad affair before him.

The Satyr at first was inclined to laugh and regard the whole matter as a joke. "Oh, nymphs," he said, "are a shilly-shally lot, good enough to dance with of a moonlight night. I've often done that myself, but as for falling in love with them, there's always trouble when it comes to that. Here, take a draught of this wine. It will give you a little nerve. By Apollo, you need it! You look done up."

"I don't want it," replied the disconsolate lover. "And," he said, returning to the subject, "she wasn't half

so shilly-shally as you say before I loved her so well. She was often thoughtful and sweet, and used to tell me that love was best of all, and lately I have not been able to get her to mention it scarcely." And, despairingly, he buried his face in his hands.

"I'll tell you what to do," said the Satyr, with decision, "but I doubt if you will do it. When one is so badly done up as you there is just about no hope. If you will do identically as I tell you, in a very short time you can have the silly thing at your side as docile as you please."

"I cannot believe it," answered the Faun. "You do not know her."

"Oh, I don't!" replied the Satyr scornfully. "All right if I don't. I know her and all the rest of her sort. And if I were you," looking admiringly at the perfect body gleaming like ivory against the background of leafage—"well, I'd have a deal of fun with that precious nymph, knowing as much as I do."

"How would you go about it?" inquired the Faun, without any animation.

"I'd comb my hair first thing and fix up generally," said the Satyr, "and then I'd neither avoid her nor seek her out. I dare say you have paid no attention to any of the rest. I'd hunt out the very prettiest of the crowd and hang around her, and when the little flirty Nymph comes looking you up be engrossed and a little surprised to see her; talk of the weather and how the gray-green of the sky melts into the blue of the lake, and so on. Keep it up. That will be the trouble with you; you'll melt at the first reproachful glance."

"I do not believe I shall," replied the Faun; "at least I shall make a strong effort to do as you say."

"If you give in before the right time you are done for," emphasized the Satyr.

"I have a notion to go along with you and be a sort of mentor," said the instructor. "I see you are in a bad way, and I want a change myself. Besides," he added, "I really like you, and as I like but very few I can

afford to take a little trouble for those few."

They set out together, and ere long came upon a gay company of nymphs and fauns in the very height of a summer evening revel.

"Which one?" demanded the Satyr.

"Over there close by the largest tree," answered his pupil.

"She is the homeliest one in the whole party," said the Satyr.

"Is she?" returned the Faun indifferently.

"Yes, she is," said the Satyr; "but then I might have expected it. Go now and select the prettiest one you can see, and dance with her. Talk with her a long time, then come to me." But the Faun was already gazing with longing eyes at his love, and did not answer.

"Do you want the whole jig to be up?" inquired the Satyr, pulling him by the arm and repeating his commands.

"It won't do any good," said the despondent one.

"Go at once, or I'll leave you and go in for a time myself," and the Satyr pushed him forward.

Thus abjured the Faun wended his steps toward a beautiful, star-eyed creature, who received his invitation to dance with every indication of satisfaction, and afterward willingly sat with him on a mossy bank watching the gay throng.

While she was as beautiful as a dream and her eyes were the blue of the first violets, he could scarce keep his attention from wandering to where he knew the golden hair he loved was floating here and there, as its restless owner disported herself, and sent covert side glances in his direction.

At last the Faun, returning, found the Satyr in a state of great glee. "You did it better than I thought you would, upon my word. Kept your back on her right along. Now, once again, someone else. Don't wait; it's as good as anything I ever saw and, let me tell you, things are coming your way."

"I haven't noticed it," said the Faun.

"That is because you had your back turned where it should be. Take a fresh start."

The encouraged Faun did as he was told, and before the revel was over he could not but observe that, though his little love laughed as much as ever, her face was paler, and he thought once, as her hand touched his in the weaving interchange of the dance, that her fingers clung to his. But, remembering the Satyr's admonition, he smiled and passed on.

Retracing his steps to the thicket where the Satyr awaited him, he said: "I did not melt—but there is no one like her."

"Bah!" laughed the Satyr, "the woods are full of them. However, I commend you, and I think another evening, if you do as well, we will witness a complete capitulation; and, by Venus! never forget what I tell you, keep it always before her. 'There are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught.' I don't know who first said that. It's true, anyhow. It's the whole secret when you come to deal with nymphs."

The next evening it was plain to the blindest that the small, yellow-headed Nymph was not herself. She laughed and frolicked, but ever and anon she would be missed, and on her return

a certain dimness about her eyes was remarked, and often and again they looked wistfully in the direction of the young Faun, who did not avoid her nor yet seek her out, and was, no doubt, enjoying himself very much in the society of the rest.

Presently she stole to his side, whispering: "What have I done? Have you forgotten?"

"Forgotten?" he asked, in evident astonishment.

"Oh, nothing—I," she said, "was thinking of our talks in the forest," and he could see the fluttering of her lip.

"I remember one of them, when you asked me why I did not disport myself. I never knew why I did not, but I know you believed it to be true that it is better to be gay."

He stopped, for a great tear rolled down her cheek.

"Come here by me," he said, with a new love of authority and command in his voice. She came quickly, her swimming eyes full of wonder upon his face.

He did not ask the Satyr if the time was come in its fulness for he knew it had; so he drew her to him, saying: "I remember our talks, and I am going to profit by what I remember. It is high time."



A BETTER WAY OF PUTTING IT

BRIGGS—Did Wimbleton marry a girl with a million?
GRIGGS—No, he married a million with a girl.



THEIR ORIGIN

"**W**HERE did those people spring from?"
"From a corner in wheat."

VARIANT VIEWS

HE wooed her by soft moonbeams' light,
And seemed to suit her mood aright;
He left her, with glad heart astir,
Betrothed, to sleep and dream of her.
He met her in the broad sunrise;
She looked at him in cool surprise
When he presumed on fancied vow.
Said she, "Refer not to last night!
That was all moonshine then—but now
I see things in a different light."

G. B.



A CONFESsION

THE WIFE—All my friends warned me that you wouldn't make me a good husband.

THE HUSBAND—Then why did you marry me—to reform me?
"No, dear; to prove that they were wrong."



INTERESTED IN HIM

BLANCHE—You aren't thinking of marrying Archibald, are you?

BELLE—Of course I am. Hasn't he a future?
"Yes, to be sure. But why jeopardize it?"



IT WAS EMPTY

KEYES—Grinder is in a bad way with writer's cramp.

STUBBS—Can he use his hand at all?

KEYES—Oh, his hand's all right; it's in his stomach.

A TWENTIETH-CENTURY PASSION

By Bertrand W. Babcock

WHEN the Martins first turned their eyes suburbward it was not without some regret at the thought of giving up their cozy New York apartments. They had been very happy together in this their first home. Its dimensions, true, were limited, but up to the present it had at least been as large as their purse. But lately Fortune had smiled in kindly wise upon the young couple. In a generous moment she had not only bestowed upon them a snug little sum of money left by an unthought-of aunt, but had also brought to the tiny apartment a little baby.

Now a sunny, burlapped apartment is the quintessence of attractiveness to a young married couple, who often rejoice in its very smallness. But greater space is desirable when children come. This the Martins at once perceived, and with the self-sacrifice peculiar to young parents they decided to take a house in some suburb.

Charley Martin was a newspaper man previous to the legacy that had come to him, and with the carelessness of future fortune peculiar to this type of worker he at once retired from active newspaper life, since it was no longer actually necessary to earn the weekly wage. He would now gratify the ambition of the literary aspirant and employ his leisure in writing more serious stuff than the work assigned to a newspaper reporter. He rather liked the idea of a house "somewhere in the country"—he always alluded to it as "the country"—where he would be far from the noise of the city. In his immediate search for a desirable place he speedily traveled over the environs

of New York. New Jersey and Brooklyn were cheaper, but Una disliked the ferries and he the Bridge. So there was nothing left save to go in the one direction through which the island of Manhattan extends—Bronxward.

In Morris Heights, a portion of Greater New York, they found the place, a red Queen Anne cottage covered with Boston ivy, set in a lot fifty by a hundred.

With the usual enthusiasm of the new commuter, they fell upon the garden with a zest and zeal inspiring. Una planted flowers promiscuously on the lawn before the house, and Charley planted vegetables, recklessly and with much "exercise" labor, in the back part. The house was really artistic, home-like, light and airy. The baby gained a pound and a half a month.

There was a stable belonging to the place—a very pretty stable over which clambered a large grapevine, and every time that the man worked at his garden at the back he looked at the stable regretfully. She, too, would sigh a bit when she sat at the back doorstep watching him dig.

One day he looked up and said:
"Una, do you think we could afford a horse?"

She looked doubtful and thoughtful. It had reduced the "fund" materially to furnish the house appropriately; the baby had proved precious indeed; the cook and nurse had both darkly referred to the bigger wages of neighboring cooks and nurses, and, of course, they were not having any regular amount coming in. Still, the man was sure to sell his lovely stories, and she could wear many of her last summer

frocks out here where the people had never seen them before. Nearly everyone in the neighborhood kept a horse. Who ever heard of living in the country horseless? And so:

"Are horses dreadfully dear, Charley?"

"Naw! I could get one for, well—er—let me see. I believe we could pick up a nice little mare for, say, fifty dollars."

"Oh, Charley, now, I don't want a frisky horse—one that'd run off with us."

"You don't want a Virginia creeper, do you?" he asked smilingly. She was from Virginia and flew to the championship of the dear old South.

"Charley Martin, if you talk like that we sha'n't get *any* horse at all. You are always poking fun at the South. It's not half as slow as Massachusetts" (he was from Massachusetts), "and besides, Charles Paul" (the baby) "is half a Virginian."

"Whew!" exclaimed Charley, pushing back his hat and mopping his brow; "what a peroration!"

"Well, I don't care!"

"Well, I do care, Una. There, don't be cross, Miss Firefly. Joke—just a joke!" And he kissed her till she was smiling.

"Well, now, how about the horse, Pussy?"

"Barkis is willin'."

"So'm I. What's the use of an empty stable, anyhow?"

"Of course. Let's get a horse at once. Suppose we go to town right now and get one. I can leave the baby for three hours, the doctor says."

"Good. But—er—we ought to get a horse in the country better than the city, don't you think?"

"What! an old farmer's horse! *I'm* from Virginia, where the horses are noted for their qualities. *I* want a thoroughbred. We'll have to look up a regular—er—er—horseman!"

"Well, I know a fellow who covered the sporting news on our paper. Let's look him up."

"Just the thing! If we're going to have a horse at all we might just as

well have a fine little blooded creature."

So they went to town. They had no difficulty in finding Snarkey of the *Journal*. He received his former associate in newsgathering with cordiality and appeared to be so glad to see him that he continued shaking the pretty Una's hand while he talked to her husband.

"Well, how are you, Charley? You're the lucky lad. Heard all about it. Came into a million, eh? I tell you what, things don't come everybody's way like that. Damn it all, Martin—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Martin." He cleared his throat and released her little hand, which she looked at ruefully.

"What a horrid, loud creature, and what a brute to hurt my hand so!" was her thought.

Charley, however, had expanded considerably under the other's words. He felt that common instinct of the man come back to his old associates in a prosperous guise. He did not deny the other's accusation that he had come into a "million."

"Yes, the little windfall *was* welcome."

"Well, I should say," agreed Snarkey. "Where are you living now—the Waldorf?"

"No, no. We have a house in—"

"A house in New York! Gee!"

Morris Heights *was* part of New York. Our hero did not deny that allegation, either.

"The fact is, Snarkey, we want to buy a—a—some horses."

"Horses! You are going in for racing?"

"Oh, no. We want—"

Here Una broke in sweetly. She had perceived her husband's delicate position from the first and sympathized with him deeply.

"We want a fine, thoroughbred horse," she said, "just for everyday use."

"Oh, I see."

"And Charley thought you could direct us to the proper parties to purchase from."

"H'm! Let me think. You want a thoroughbred—an extra fine—a—what are you willing to pay?"

"Well, the fact is, Snarkey, I've really no idea of the value of horses," said Charley diffidently.

"But down South in Virginia," put in Una, "we could get a beauty for fifty dollars."

"Oh, come, come, Mrs. Martin, not for a fifty."

She blushed and pouted bewitchingly.

"Yes, really," she said.

"Well, you can't get no thoroughbred for that," said Snarkey decidedly. Then, addressing himself to Charley: "Women are 'way off always on the subject of horses." He laughed.

"Well, Snarkey, what would it cost?" asked Charley.

"Yes, what *would* it?" Una added. "We want one at any price," this last very proudly.

"We-ell, to get a real, fine, crackajack thoroughbred, a little muscly, swell highstepper, I should say you might pick one up at five hundred—and that'd be an uncommon bargain."

"Five hundred dollars!" gasped Una Martin, and clung weakly to her Charley. "Why, that's—that's not—so—very—much," she finished bravely. She felt acutely that Charley's pride before his former associate must be saved at any cost.

"Five hundred dollars!" repeated Charley. "That's rather stiff, old man."

"Not for the article."

"Well, say five hundred dollars, then. Can we see such an animal? We've not a great while to spare——"

"I have *got* to get back in three hours," said Una positively. One of the three hours was already gone.

Snarkey scratched his head thoughtfully.

"I know a chap who wants to sell his horse and rig—dandy little trap—you'll want a carriage, of course?"

"Of course," said Una faintly. They had really forgotten all about that.

"Well, this fellow's a friend of mine, and I believe I could get you the outfit for a thousand—dirt cheap at that."

Una sat down helplessly, but, nevertheless, she was very proud of her husband when she heard him say: "Well, let's see it, anyhow. Of course I know we can't get a horse and rig for nothing."

Snarkey grinned.

"I should say not," said he; "and by the way, Martin, I know a man who'd make a good coachman for you if you have none yet."

Charley moved uneasily. Una shook her head at him from behind Snarkey.

"Oh, I'll look into that myself afterward," said Charley nonchalantly.

All of a sudden Snarkey bethought himself of another scheme, and he struck Charley Martin upon the shoulder with vehemence.

"By Jove, I must be dopy not to have thought of it before. Why don't you two get an automobile?"

"Automobile!"

"Automobile!"

The word escaped the young couple's lips simultaneously. They had never even dreamed of such a thing.

Charley spoke bluntly at last.

"We can't afford it," he said shortly.

"Oh, go on. It's cheaper than a horse, man."

"Oh, no——"

"I know what I'm talking about. A horse costs a few dollars less than an auto to buy it, but to *keep* the horse there's its feed and housing and a man to care for it and——"

"Well, if it comes to that I can do all that myself. I was always good at mechanical things."

"Ha! ha! Mechanical—that's good! My dear boy, did you ever currycomb a horse?"

"No, but——"

"My dear Mrs. Martin"—he turned to Una—"how would you like your husband to come to the table smelling of the stables?"

"It would be awful—perfectly awful!" said Una, with tears in her big blue eyes. "Charley, I c-couldn't

bear it." She was beginning to feel quite hysterical.

"Well, what shall we do then?"

"Get an automobile."

"Oh, let's!" said Una, fairly trembling in anticipation of the sensation she would create among her former friends, all of whom were in modest circumstances.

"What would it cost?" inquired the weakening Charley.

"You could get a Flyte touring-car for thirty-five hundred, and a Flyte runabout for a thousand."

"We only want a runabout," said Una quickly.

So they went over to the Flyte auto exchange, and Snarkey, with a word aside to the superintendent of the shops, betrayed the guileless ones and left them.

They looked at all the machines in the shop, scarcely hiding their awe beneath their flurried questions. The moment Charley Martin began to look at the machines a queer sort of glow ran through him. He had always loved machinery. These automobiles set his very heart a-thumping. As for Una, the young and inexperienced and therefore vain, they represented social elevation to her. She called them "just dear things," and so they were.

Then the crucial trial was made, and the two were taken on a delirious flying trip through Central Park. The experience was giddy. They stepped from the machine, their hearts intoxicated. Without further ado they bought and paid cash for a little one-seated runabout. Charley was to come down each day for a week until he had learned to run it. Then he was to take it home. They felt as if treading on air when they left the shops. Una squeezed Charley's arm excitedly.

"Oh, Charley," she said, "wasn't it just splendid!"

Charley nodded.

"But," Una continued, "it was awfully expensive, and we'll have to go short on other things."

"Pussy," said her husband, stop-

ping short, "I'll work hard and make up for it. That machine is to be used only at certain times. It will be a rest—an inspiration. But I must earn the right to ride in it each day. I'll write all morning and ride all—"

"All afternoon," finished Una. "How lovely!"

But when they reached the New York Central station Una's good nature vanished. She discovered they had been gone four and a half hours, and there would not be a train for another fifteen minutes. Her little baby was starving! How thoughtless and cruel they had been! When would that train come? She never had wanted an automobile, anyhow. She had always despised them. People who rode in them just thought they owned the earth, and rode over everybody else, and oh, dear! Charles Paul would starve! And that train! Why didn't that hateful man open the gate, anyhow? The train was there. What was the sense of keeping them standing outside when they might just as well be comfortably seated in the auto—train! How on earth did she come to say "auto"? She was so angry with herself that she kept silence exactly twenty seconds, and then: "Oh, Charley, don't be so dumb! Why don't you speak to that trainman? I'm so tired! That's what we get for burying ourselves in the country, and our poor, little, helpless, innocent, hungry— Oh, there, that gate's open at last!"

Charley's head throbbed a bit by the time they reached the house. For the first time he found himself thinking of his wife as something other than an angel, and when the fat baby was discovered sound asleep, none the worse for a possibly needed fast, he felt justifiably angry with her. Thus the insidious automobile had wrought mischief before even entering the home.

The following day, betimes, saw Charley Martin running for an early-morning train. Charley had thought and dreamed all night of flying through the air on strange electric wings. The

sensation of freedom, of speed, of delirious elation, was enchanting. It was like an opium dream of pleasure. He had an early breakfast, and as Una had not awakened when he had finished he went to her room and knocked till she called in a sleepy voice:

"What is it, Fanny?"

"It's I, Una."

He opened the door and went in softly. She sighed and moved about on her pillow sleepily.

"I'm going out—" he began.

"Oh, goodness, I've been awake half the night with the baby. Can't you even let me get a little morning rest?"

"Yes, dearest, but—but—I'm going out to—to the automobile place, Una."

"Oh, bother the automobile!" said Una, with sleepy savagery, and turned her face to the wall. He crossed on tiptoe and kissed her. She murmured drowsily:

"Do be careful now, and don't get blown up. There, then! Don't smother me. Good-bye. . . . Oh, you've awakened him!"

She sat up angry now, and Charley disappeared from the room before she could turn her attention from the baby which was now crying loudly.

He proved an apt pupil, so they told him at the automobile shop. The superintendent thought he could run the machine himself before a week. At noon Charley was laughing confidently. He had run the machine, unaided, half a dozen times through Central Park, and the man who sat on the seat beside him said he'd never seen anyone learn so quickly. By three in the afternoon Charley was quite sure he could take the machine home that day, and the automobile people, glad, now that the sale was done, to be rid of him and the run-about, thought so too.

Charley went through the Park intrepidly, with rather more than the speed he had thus far allowed himself; but once away from the watchful eye of the "demonstrator" he felt more confidence in himself.

His troubles began when he left the Park. The streets confused him, and once or twice, intending to slacken speed, he pushed the lever the wrong way, which caused the machine to bound forward. Going down a slight incline the brake refused to work, and he spun down the hill at a rapid speed. When he was able to stop he got out and adjusted the brake. They had told him how. It worked perfectly after that. Things went smoothly for a time; then, in passing through a street on which was a public school, the children hooted at him shrilly: "Get a horse! get a horse!" It made him nervous, particularly so when some Italian workmen joined in the cry of the youngsters and a couple of young girls laughed at him.

He crossed Washington Bridge and was soon well on the road home, when suddenly there was a great sizzling under the machine and a jet of fierce steam puffed from beneath the water-glass. He stopped with a jerk. He examined the machine and all seemed right, but for precaution's sake he turned out the fire. Something was wrong—what, he could not tell. He tinkered with it a bit, but failed to solve the problem, and mindful of Una's injunction not to get blown up, he decided not to attempt to run it farther.

And so, for more than two hours, he remained stuck in the road, waiting for some passing horse-drawn vehicle to pull him home. Those he accosted were unwilling. Some drivers laughed and jeered at him; others ignored him. The automobilist is universally and unreasonably detested by the drivers of all other kinds of vehicles. Toward dusk a great dray, drawn by four enormous horses, came along. Charley made what he intended to be a last appeal, holding up a bill in his hand and shouting: "Five dollars!"

The driver got down, stolidly tied the automobile to the back of the dray, and thus, ignominiously pulled by four stout horses, a huge dray between, sitting discomfited on the seat in order to guide it, Charley Martin took home his automobile.

II

THEY enjoyed their purchase for a time. Some days they would leave in the morning, taking the baby with them, and spin across the country, along the Sound, through Pelham Bay, and stop at New Rochelle, where they had friends. The trip would cost only a few gallons of gasoline—they always said "only." But they rode the machine every day, morning, afternoon and sometimes night. It was a thing of joy. It had wings. It was a witch, for it soothed as nothing else could the throbbing head, and fairly drove from it the thoughts of the intended author of the great American novel to come.

But at the end of the second week Una, looking into Charley's account-book, discovered they had spent twenty-two dollars on gasoline, had had to have the water-glass mended twice, costing twenty-four dollars—part of this for hauling the machine to town—and had bought twenty dollars' worth of tools and a new water pump, costing five dollars. She upbraided Charley so fiercely that he swore he would not ride in the automobile again until she begged to be taken. But he was so loving to her all the following day that in the afternoon she "begged."

It was shortly after this that the boiler burned out, and that was a serious matter. They paid a bill of fifty-five dollars. New pipes had to be put in the boiler and the old ones patched. Una cried bitterly about it. She accused her husband of overdoing the sport. He had run about in the automobile until the boiler had burst. Charley, tired of what he termed her "ceaseless nagging over his one pleasure," went out in the machine and did not return till night. This was not his fault, however. He had intended going only as far as Van Cortlandt Park, but on the way something went wrong with the fire-box and he couldn't get home. They ate dinner in complete silence. When Charley, later, kissed the baby Una bade the nurse put the latter instantly to bed. The moment

the nurse had left the room she turned upon her husband.

"Charles Martin, don't dare to touch my baby! It's only hypocrisy on your part. You've plainly proved that you think more of a dirty, greasy machine than of us." With that she went into her own room and locked the door.

Charley retired to his study, where Una supposed he was thinking over her words and feeling properly sorry for his behavior. But Charley was tired with his day's experiences, and when Una tiptoed to the keyhole and listened the brute was plainly snoring.

When it became known among Charley Martin's friends that he possessed an automobile they sought him out. In a short time the Martins no longer felt that first sense of loneliness which their somewhat isolated position in the semi-country might have induced. The distance from downtown to Morris Heights was nothing to the man who wanted an automobile ride, and Charley had reason to "show off" the machine each day. This pleased and delighted him. The little runabout was his darling and pride.

"Now, you see, Una," he said one day at luncheon, as he was hastily eating his meal, "it's not nearly so dead out here as we thought it would be. I tell you what, your real friends will look you up wherever you are."

"Yes, your *real* friends," said Una, with only half-veiled sarcasm. Charley was not blessed with the virtue of amiability in these days. He had always so much to do, so many places to go, that these little sneering expressions of Una's irritated him intensely. He set down his glass now.

"What do you mean by that remark?"

"Just what I said," she retorted.

"Do you mean to cast a slur upon my friends?"

"That's right, Charley; they are always *your* friends who come here."

Charley pushed his chair back. His eyes looked ugly.

"Well, what of it?"

"They don't come to see you—you needn't flatter yourself," she said, with a sneer.

She had never before seen her husband look quite so cruel. His eyes were narrowed, his jaw protruded. Una got up and stood waiting for the words she knew would come.

"I suppose they come to see *you*," he said, with meaning.

She had become white with anger, and her lip trembled so that she could not speak. Without a word to him she left the room. He followed her, really sorry and ashamed of himself.

"I didn't mean that, Una."

She looked up at him strangely, her large blue eyes almost black and brilliant with some inward excitement.

"I am becoming used to your insults," she said.

"You are eternally driving me to say unpleasant things. Why don't you let a fellow alone? What's the use in wrangling over little trifles?"

"Is it 'little trifles' to lose one's servants through your actions?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"You do. You never are here for your meals on time. You start out in the morning and rush in at two or three for your luncheon. You never are home for dinner before seven. Fanny is going to leave. She says she won't stand it."

"I'll talk with Fanny. These colored girls are easily soothed."

Una smiled bitterly and turned away to stare out through the window at what once had been the beginnings of a vegetable garden. It was now an amazing mass of weeds and half-grown vegetables, full of bugs and mosquitos. She covered her eyes from the sight of it. Instantly Charley seized her and drew her into his arms.

"Oh, Pussy, now don't cry—don't cry, sweetheart! Why didn't you tell me before what was worrying you? I'll fix Fanny—raise her wages or—"

"We can't afford to pay her more," said Una, releasing herself. "We can't afford it," she repeated.

"Well, Fanny's easily managed. You know, Una, you want to use some

tact with a colored girl. Instead of scolding her when she does wrong, if you'd—"

Una made an indescribable gesture.

"Don't! don't!" she said. "Every word you say makes it harder—harder for me to bear it."

"Bear what? What are you talking about?"

She burst out passionately. Her heart had been overburdened long.

"You! I can't bear you any longer. You are unreliable. You have no ballast to your character. You have let everything go to ruin to gratify your pleasure—no, your actual lust, for that miserable automobile! It has become a mania with you."

He was pale as she now, and as angry.

"Take care, Una—take care what you say!"

"I will not!" she cried, now thoroughly aroused. "I have stood it long enough. You promised to work when we came here. What have you done?"

"We've been here only three months," he muttered sullenly.

"Three months!" she repeated shrilly. "Ah, but that has been time enough for you to waste several thousand dollars on a folly—"

"Now you are exaggerating, as usual."

"No, I am not!"

"Oh, yes. We have not spent *several thousand*."

"We have! I've seen your account-book. It—it made me—sick."

There was silence for a space. Then she went nearer to him and put her hand imploringly on his arm.

"Charley, don't waste any more time on that machine. Our money will be all gone before we know, and nothing—absolutely nothing to show for it."

"Oh, well," said Charley sullenly, "no one expected it to last forever. When it goes I can return to newspaper work, so far as that goes."

Her hand dropped from his arm.

"There is no use arguing with you," she said hopelessly.

"What do you want me to do, Una? Do you want me to give away our automobile?"

"No. You can sell it."

"What would I get for it?"

"You would save all you would be spending on it if we kept it."

"Oh, pshaw! the amount to run it costs no more than what you spent on hats last year."

"It's not the gasoline bill, though that's big enough, but the repairs—they've cost more than the machine twice over."

"That's because the boiler burst four times. Now I understand it and know how to handle it. There won't be any more such accidents."

But a few days later a leak sprang in the gasoline tank, and he came within an inch of being blown up. The leak was mended. Then a couple of the tires gave out.

They cost twenty-five dollars apiece. He procured new ones. He also bought a new kind of automatic pump. The boiler gave him some more trouble, and he decided to have an entirely new one put in. Also, the water tank sprang a leak and had to be mended. He bought a new patent torch for lighting and heating the fire.

September found him a complete slave to the machine, as complete a slave as the drunkard is to his drink. He was simply possessed of an insatiate craving to be off, his hand upon the lever, whirling along through the sweet-smelling air, his mind too intent upon guiding the machine to think of the petty trials and troubles of everyday life. He learned to love the smell of gasoline. The noise of the engine, going chug, chug, chug, was as music to his ears. He made the acquaintance of other automobilists and fell a victim to the smooth tongue of another automobile agent. He rode two or three times in a large, double-seated touring-car, and became conscious of a restless longing to possess such a machine. His own small runabout seemed tame and slow after his experience in the wonderful monster. He did not broach the subject to his wife, however, until he had actually bought one of these models, and for some days had

kept it at the shop of the man who sold him gasoline. One day Una asked:

"What's become of your automobile? I have not seen it lately in the barn, and I thought baby and I might have a ride today."

Charley smiled foolishly.

"The fact is, Una—the fact is—" he began, but could go no further.

"Well?" she prompted suspiciously. "You don't mean to tell me it has broken down again?"

"Oh, dear, no! The fact is—well—er—I sold it."

"Sold it!" She started up, surprised. "Why, Charley!"

"Yes, I sold it," repeated Charley; "that is, I—er—exchanged it."

Una paled with apprehension, and he continued hastily:

"You see, Una, the baby was getting too heavy for you to hold in your arms in the carriage, and I thought if I got a two-seated auto the nurse could—"

"How much did you pay?" Her voice was hoarse.

"My dear Una, it was a bargain—a ridiculous bargain. Why, they allowed me for my old, patched-up machine four hundred and fifty dollars, and—"

"We paid a thousand for it only six months ago, and heaven knows how much more since for repairs."

"That's just it, Una. It was a badly made machine. Now, the new one is so perfectly built it can't get out of repair. What's more, it takes only half the quantity of gasoline, and I don't have to carry nearly so much water. In fact, it has a system of pipes—"

She buried her face in her hands on the table and sobbed:

"How could you do it? How could you? How could you?"

He watched her uneasily, but did not attempt to soothe her. She lifted her wet face.

"Charley, how much did it cost?"

He told her the first deliberate lie.

"Una, it was an exchange. I gave him our nineteen-hundred-and-three

model for his nineteen-hundred-and—one model."

"You paid nothing more?"

"Nothing," he said; but he did not look at her.

He went out quickly after that, and she did not see him all the rest of the day.

She did not believe him. Her suspicions were heavy upon her all day. Toward evening she went to the door of his study and found it locked. She opened it with another key, which fortunately fitted.

Charley came home early—early for him. It was half-past six when his new motor-car puffed and steamed into the back yard, filling all the neighborhood with its noise and odor. He blew his horn to call Una's attention to his return, but she did not come down to the door, as was her wont. He turned off the fire, let the steam out a bit and went indoors, drawing off his well-burned and oiled gloves as he passed through the kitchen.

"Where is Mrs. Martin?" he asked Fanny.

"Upstairs," she replied.

"Dinner ready?" he inquired.

"One hour ago," said Fanny grimly.

He left a quarter for her on the table, and her large mouth grinned when she saw it. She was making at this rate two dollars extra a week.

Charley went through the deserted drawing-room and up the stairs. Una was not in her room. The baby was screaming loudly in the nursery. He was being undressed for bed—something he fiercely and daily resented as hard as two little fat heels and enormous lungs could do. Thinking Una was in there, Charley was about to enter, when he suddenly noticed that his door was partially open. He remembered he had locked it. He went in hastily. Una sat at his large table-desk, his account-book spread open before her. For a moment the two looked at each other without speaking. Then she stood up and spoke tensely.

"Liar!" she said. "Liar!"

"Una!"

"Liar!" she repeated.

He recognized the paper in her hand—the receipted bill for \$3,500 for the touring-car.

"Well?" he said, throwing his cap recklessly across the room, "what are you going to do about it?"

She could not speak for the intensity of her rage. He felt sorry for her. He went toward her impetuously.

"Don't look like that, little girl. I'll sell the damned thing. Upon my word, I will this time. This is the last of it—upon my honor!"

"You have no honor," she said, and threw the mass of bills she held in her hand in his face. He had not time to resent her action, for in a moment she had left the room. He went to the seat she had vacated and sat looking ruefully at the condition of his desk. The account-book, open at a certain page, revealed the fact that she knew just the amount left to them, \$1,800 out of \$10,000.

The dinner gong sounded loudly and he went down to the dining-room at once. Una was not at the table. He began his meal without her, but after a time he told Fanny to inform her mistress that dinner was ready.

"Mrs. Martin is outside—in the yard, sir."

A foreboding came upon him. He jumped up from his seat, dashed through the hall and kitchen and out into the back yard. It was dark, and he could see only the outlines of the automobile, standing there by the stable door. But he heard something that made the blood rush to his head. Then he saw Una with the raised axe in her hands.

"What are you doing?" he cried hoarsely, and rushed upon her.

In a moment he saw the wreck she had wrought, and a veritable groan of anguish escaped his lips. Then the axe dropped from her hands and she ran to him and threw her arms about his neck.

"Charley! Charley!"

"It cost three thousand five hundred dollars!" he said dully.

"And we have only eighteen hundred left!" she sobbed. "You can never buy another."

"This is vandalism," he said heavily.

"It is economy," said she.

The sight of the magnificent thing all battered and broken, for she had done her work well, sickened him. He turned away from it, staggering toward the house.

"We can sell it for junk," she said piteously.

He did not answer.

"And Charley," she continued pleadingly, "you will have to work soon, for our money will not last much longer, and baby needs new things every day."

Still he did not answer. He seemed to be thinking painfully. They were standing on the back steps now, he leaning against the door, she below him, holding his hand.

"You can get back on the *Journal*," she said.

He shook his head.

"I won't do newspaper work again," he muttered.

"You'll have to do something," she said.

"Yes—that is what I was thinking about."

He moved away uncertainly.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

He stopped and looked at her. In the darkness he could see her white, pleading face, with the wet tears upon it.

"You did right," he said, "right to break it. It was the plaything of a king. But I loved it—I don't know why. It—it enthralled me. And I can't give it up, Una, even now."

She began to cry, very pitifully, and he drew her to him gently, encircling her with his arm.

"There, little girl, I have been a brute, and I did lie to you. But I won't again. I'm going to tell you what I shall do. I know a fellow—a millionaire, Una, who keeps a dozen automobiles. I'm going to see him about a position."

"What kind of a position, Charley?"

"Chauffeur," he answered bluntly. "I'd rather be that than anything else."

She broke from his arms. There was positive agony in her voice.

"You don't mean it—you can't mean it!"

"I do."

"Charley, think of me, think of Charles Paul!"

"I'm not ashamed of the work," he answered doggedly, "and it's all I'm fit for, anyhow. I can get eighteen dollars, or even twenty dollars a week, and I can spend my life whirling about in all kinds of machines. It's the only life worth while in this twentieth century. I'm going to follow it."

He stooped and kissed her fondly.

"Don't cry, little Una. You'll get used to it soon, and—and—Una, I'm going to be kinder to you and see more of you and Charles Paul in the future."



A SIMILARITY

GILES—The jury was out all night, but failed to agree.
MRS. GILES—Well, you can never agree with anybody when you have been out all night.



THE "dead broke" wave is truly curious. It usually strikes an entire circle of friends at the same time.